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CATHOLICITY AND METHODISM:

OR

THE RELATION OF JOHN WESLEY

TO

MODERN THOUGHT.

BY

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Dass mehr Licht hereinkomme.

—Dying words of GOETHE.

MONTREAL:
THE BURLAND-DESBARATS LITHOGRAPHIC COMPANY.
1877.

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PREFACE.

THIS little work is not intended as an attack upon any man's opinions. Its main object is simply to ascertain the limits within which a minister of the Methodist Church of Canada is allowed by the legal standards of that body to exercise his private judgment, and to show the bearings on Protestant and Christian work of that liberty of thought and speech which those standards sanction. It is not an attempt to establish a system of theology foreign from those standards; but it is an effort, by an analysis of them, to render their own teachings definite and harmonious, and to learn whether, when so harmonized, they are in sympathy, or in antagonism, with the learning and spirit of this age. It is a small contribution to the work of eliminating from Protestantism those elements which at once prevent its unity, and impel it towards either the form or the spirit of ecclesiastical Rome.

I have been desirous of placing before some portion, *at least*, of the Canadian public, a very brief outline of certain historical facts, without a knowledge of which a proper comprehension of many important questions must be impossible. With this view, the work has been put into a shape which, it is hoped, will bring it within the reach of every person taking an interest in the questions therein discussed.

In preparing the following pages, I have had in full view the advice of Horace :—

> ----------Si quid tamen olim
> Scripseris, in Mæci descendat judicis aures
> Et patris et nostras, nonumque prematur in annum,
> Membranis intus positis ; delere licebit
> Quod non ediderís ; nescit vox missa reverti.
> —(De Arte Poet., vv. 386-396.)

"If ever you write anything, let it be submitted to the judgment of Mœcius Tarpa, the critic, to your father's and to mine; let it be preserved until the ninth year, and keep your manuscript within your own guardianship: what you have not published, you can blot out; but a word once sent forth knows no return."

Were it allowed, I should gladly acknowledge my indebtedness to more than one *judex Tarpa* for valuable suggestions; and, if circumstances did not demand immediate publication, I should wait the due term of years, more fully to mature the thought and to perfect the style of what I have written. I can only hope that any force the argument may have will not be made to suffer for the defects of my mode of presenting it.

JAMES ROY.

Montreal, April, 1877.

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guage, quoted from the "General Rules" of the Society, indicates an imperfection in the prevailing view, even of the founder, Wesley, concerning the religious condition of the members; but they feared God, and wrought righteousness. These people were bound by no ecclesiastical or doctrinal test.

For many years, Calvinist and Arminian worked harmoniously together in the common cause of bringing men to God. For three years and more, there existed in England an ecclesiastical society whose foundation was catholic, having unity of spirit and aim, and liberty in the individual, lay or clerical, to carry out that aim according to his own conscience, under great general principles. Even if the will of Wesley did impose restraints, and the General Rules were, in some points, founded on misapprehensions of the meaning of the Bible, and of the force of prudential motives, the Methodist Society was yet the most catholic of any that had arisen since the days of the Apostles.

3. The language of John Wesley, in his "Thoughts upon a late Phenomenon,"* is fully justifiable.

"One circumstance more," he says," is quite peculiar to "the people called Methodists; that is, the terms upon which "any person may be admitted into their society. They do "not impose, in order to their admission, any opinions "whatever. Let them hold particular or general redemp- "tion, absolute or conditional decrees; let them be Church- "men or Dissenters, Presbyterians or Independents, it is no "obstacle. Let them choose one mode of baptism or another, "it is no bar to their admission. The Presbyterian may be "a Presbyterian still; the Independent or Anabaptist may "use his own mode of worship. So may the Quaker; and "none will contend with him about it. They think and "let think. One condition, and one only, is required, a real "desire to save their soul. Where this is, it is enough; they "desire no more; they lay stress upon nothing else; they "ask only, 'Is thy heart herein as my heart? If it be, give "me thy hand.' Is there any other society in Great Britain "or Ireland that is so remote from bigotry? that is so truly "of a catholic spirit? so ready to admit all serious persons "without distinction? Where, then, is there such another "society in Europe? in the habitable world? I know none. "Let any man show it me that can."

Methodism, then, in its terms of communion, was, at one time, catholic.

* Works, Vol. vii, Am. ed., p. 321.

CHAPTER II.

HOW IT CEASED TO BE CATHOLIC.

Is the implication that it is no longer catholic a misrepresentation of existing facts? Is the language appropriate to its earlier time suitable to Methodism now? Is that system now adapted to universality? Is it not simply one of many denominations? Are not its lines of doctrine, ritual, custom, and character as definitely fixed, and as distinct, as those of other sects? Is it not ill adapted, in its present form, to certain races, localities, and classes? Would not rigid adherence to some of its rules often be disastrous to its numerical prosperity, without making its character and zeal superior to those of other denominations? In the United States, where it has gained the strongest hold it possesses anywhere upon the educated classes, has it not succeeded largely by relaxing much of the rigidity yet retained by it in its native land? Does it not reject members and ministers whom other Churches, no less godly, learned, and zealous than itself, are honored by securing? That the same remark may be applied to those Churches, also, does not prove that it is less true of Methodism. Whence arose the present position of that body, as a sect, and no longer as a catholic society or Church? The causes are numerous; and it is not necessary, here, to trace them all: a few must suffice.

1. History assures us that the first internal cause of the loss of catholicity in Methodism was an imperfect development of its conceptions of God's love, and, consequently, of its brotherly sympathies for men. This remark applies not to the conceptions of the extent to which the bestowal of God's favor is possible, but of the extent of its actual bestowal at any given time. The recognition by Methodists of the wide extent of the divine favor for men has been of slow growth. Spiritual sympathy is the germ of ecclesiastical form and life; but it is itself begotten of truth; and, if our views of truth are narrow, so will be our sympathies. Who enjoy God's favor? The answer to this question makes our theology and our Churches. In the case of Wesley, history records a constant growth of extended sympathy. At first, this was limited by the bounds of certain organizations assuming to themselves the title of "the Church," or the "orthodox." Next, it

extended to those, whether orthodox or not, who had realized a certain subjective phase of religious experience which he termed a state of "justification." Finally, it rested on all who reverently yielded to the laws of Him whom we call "God," — that Power who is the source of moral obligation. These different views of humanity prevailed, at different and successive periods, in the mind of the founder of Methodism.

In the beginning of 1738, he writes of himself, in his Journal, as being unconverted when he went to America. He accuses himself as having no "faith" in the proper sense of the word, and as being "a child of wrath." He lived long enough to deny all this in notes at the foot of the pages containing his self-accusations.

In 1754, he published his Notes on the New Testament. In them, on Acts x, 4, he says: "Dare any man say "these (prayers and alms) were only *splendid sins?* Or "that they were an abomination before God? And yet, in "the Christian sense Cornelius was then an unbeliever. He "had not then faith in Christ." On verse 35, he says: "*But* "*in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteous-*"*ness*, he that, first, reverences God as great, wise, good, "the cause, end, and governor of all things; and, secondly, "from this awful regard to him, not only avoids all known "evil, but endeavors, according to the best light he has, to "do all things well, *is accepted of him.* Through Christ "though he knows him not. The assertion is express, and "admits of no exception. He is in the favor of God, "whether enjoying his written word and ordinances or not."

In his Journal, Dec. 1st, 1767, he writes as follows: "Being "alone in the coach, I was considering several points of "importance. And thus much appeared clear as the day: "That a man may be saved, who cannot express himself "properly concerning imputed righteousness. Therefore, to "do this is not necessary to salvation. That a man may be "saved, who has not clear conceptions of it. (Yea, that "never heard the phrase.) Therefore, clear conceptions "of it are not necessary to salvation: yea, it is not neces-"sary to salvation to use the phrase at all. That a pious "churchman who has not clear conceptions even of justi-"fication by faith may be saved. Therefore, clear concep-"tions even of this are not necessary to salvation. That a "Mystic, who denies justification by faith (Mr. Law, for "instance), may be saved. But, if so, what becomes of "*articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ* (the article by fidelity

" to which a Church stands or falls) ? If so, is it not high " time for us

Projicere ampullas et sesquipedalia verba,

(To cast away high-sounding terms, and words of learned length,) *

" and to return to the plain word : ' He that feareth God, " and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him ? ' "

In the Arminian Magazine for 1786, he writes, concerning Thomas Firmin, a pious and benevolent Unitarian friend of Archbishop Tillotson: " I was exceedingly struck " at reading the following life ; having long settled it in my " mind that the entertaining wrong notions concerning the " Trinity was inconsistent with real piety. But I cannot " argue against matter of fact. I dare not deny that Mr. " Firmin was a pious man ; although his notions of the " Trinity were quite erroneous."

By this, he corrects the following sentence in his sermon on the Trinity, preached in 1775 : " Therefore, I do not " see how it is possible for any one to have vital religion " who denies that these Three are One."

As Methodism began in 1739, it will be seen that, from its commencement to the time when Wesley acknowledged the Christianity of Unitarians, Methodism had been in existence for forty-seven years. In his sermon, No. CVI., on " Faith," published in 1788, he shows that the views and sympathies even of his preachers had been too narrow, during at least the early part of the preceding half-century; and, in it, he extends the possibility of acceptance with God even to Deists, and hesitates about denying it to Materialists, evidently dimly seeing a possibility of a Materialist recognizing a Power which imposes moral obligations, and to obey which is to secure its favors, even though that Power should appear to be impersonal. That this is the correct view of the sermon alluded to will be evident from the following considerations. He has two objects in view ; first, to show that all faith which leads to goodness is acceptable to God ; and second, that all faith lower than Christian faith comes short of the Truth. His condemnations, then, in the second part of the discourse, are of systems, not of men. Again, in I., 2, he says of the Materialist's faith : " If you allow a Materialist " to have any," thus granting the possibility of it. Again, in I., 3, we read : " Their not believing the whole truth is not " owing to want of sincerity, but merely to want of light."

* Horace, *De Arte Poet.* l. 97.

The connection of this shows that if, in Materialists and Deists, *sincere* faith exists, the want of "light" will not deprive them of God's favor. In I., 13, he says: "There "is no reason why you should be satisfied with the faith of "a Materialist, a Heathen, or a Deist; nor, indeed, with that "of a servant. I do not know that God requires it at your "hands. Indeed, if you have received this, you ought not "to cast it away; you ought not in any wise to undervalue "it, but to be truly thankful for it. Yet, in the meantime, "beware how you rest here."

Further, in his sermon against bigotry, he acknowledges that, possibly, a Deist may turn men from sin to goodness, which supposes that his faith has been sufficient to turn himself. In Sermon CVI., 1., 2, he writes: "Indeed, "nearly fifty years ago, when the Preachers, commonly "called Methodists, began to preach that grand scriptural "doctrine, salvation by faith, they were not sufficiently ap- "prized of the difference between a servant and a child of "God. They did not clearly understand that even one 'who "feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of "him.' In consequence of this, they were apt to make sad "the hearts of those whom God had not made sad."

This passage is valuable, as it shows the importance that Wesley, in his later life, attached to the view of saving faith which is suggested by his Notes on Cornelius.

Thus, during this progress for half a century in Wesley's mind, his societies were being trained by men who had not yet fully caught the kindly charity which was only growing in his own heart. His people, as a whole, have not, in 1877, reached the height of that charity; what, then, must have been the narrowness of the earlier time? This narrowness of view, and consequently of sympathy, would necessarily, in no long time, destroy that catholicity of which Mr. Wesley boasted, and did destroy it.

2. History records a narrowing of the organic form of the Societies corresponding to that of the inward thoughts and feelings of the members of those Societies. As the mollusc grows, so grows the shell. Let the spirit of a system expand, and the system itself must expand, or break. But let the spirit contract, and the system which enshrines it will contract with it.

(*a*) We find a curtailment of the liberties of the individual members of the Societies. Before the spirit of the early Methodists had time to expand, it was cramped by narrow rules. It was not enough to lay down for them the general

principles of abstaining from evil and of doing good; but the individual judgment was subjected to a prescribed method; and in one instance, at least, on the wearing of gold, that method was based on a misconception of the meaning of the Bible.*

In 1742, a prudential regulation, which then proved highly advantageous, which has since been of inestimable value, and which, if ever abandoned, will largely tend to destroy the peculiar religious character of the Church, was introduced, for the first time, three years after the founding of the Society. This was the formation of classes, which subsequently developed into class-meetings. At first, the leaders visited the members of the classes at their homes; afterwards, all assembled at one place. For three years, there was Methodism without this regulation; yet, in process of time, it became compulsory to attend these class-meetings. The institution has proved its right to live and flourish: the compulsory rule was an infringement on previously existing liberties.

(*b*) We next find the liberties of the Churches not fully recognized. Though Wesley had learned before January 20th, 1746, from Lord King's account of the "Primitive Church," "that, originally, every Christian congregation was a Church independent on all others," and though he had before him the example of the apostolic "council" at

* An examination of 1 Peter, iii., 3, 4, will show that two things may be regarded as adornment,—dress, and the graces of character. Peter does not place these as alternatives that are mutually exclusive. He does not mean that, where "a meek and quiet spirit" exists, the "putting on of apparel" is to be abandoned. Yet the "putting on of apparel" is quite as much forbidden as the "wearing of gold." The true sense evidently is that, in the exercise of that desire to be attractive of which the female sex is peculiarly susceptible, the test of true adornment should be the inward character rather than the outward appearance. In 1 Tim., ii., 9, 10, the same distinction may be seen, though "good works" here take the place of "a meek and quiet spirit." If it be still urged that Paul prescribes the actual form of dress which women must never adopt, let it be remembered that Paul himself will then be represented as making a rule for one sex which he does not bind on the other, thus practically contradicting his principle that, in Christ, "there is neither male nor female." If it be urged that, in these verses, he lays down a rule to be observed in all places and in all times, one may legitimately ask if this is consistent with the catholic principles which he himself advanced, that the Kingdom of God does not consist in outward observances, but in inward character, and that, where the latter is like Christ, in the former, every man should be "fully persuaded in his own mind," and not bedictated to by another. Paul's test of female propriety is modesty; and there may be times when the wearing of gold and pearls and braided hair is a proof of immodesty. Who will say it is so everywhere and always? When it is, let these adornments be rejected: when it is not, let women and men remember that Paul himself has said: "I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself."

Jerusalem, in favor of a wide extension of liberty to particular Churches, yet he sincerely believed it proper to enforce upon his societies a uniformity not necessary to their existence. In the choice or retention of a pastor beyond three years, except in the case of the established "clergy," no congregation had any part. In the Conference legislation which affected the interests of particular churches, as well as those of the whole connection, the early practice of inviting to a seat in Conference any stranger, male or female, of piety and judgment, ceased; and no church was allowed any but clerical representation.* In time, even the introduction of organs, gowns, or liturgies became a matter too great for the decision of separate congregations.†

(*c*) The next phase of the decrease of catholicity is a narrowing of the liberties of thought in the preachers. In the early Conferences, doctrinal points were discussed in open session. The first Conference was held in 1744. On the propriety "of thoroughly debating every question which might arise," the decision was given as follows: "What are we afraid of? Of overturning our first prin-"ciples? If they are false, the sooner they are overturned "the better. If they are true, they will bear the strictest "examination. Let us all pray for the willingness to re-"ceive light to know every doctrine whether it be of God."‡

How far each person was to submit to the majority was decided thus: "In speculative things each can only submit "so far as his judgment shall be convinced; in every prac-"tical point, so far as we can, without wounding our several "consciences."§

Thus Calvinists and Arminians dwelt in harmony. Liberty produced progress. Of the Conference of 1745, and its advancement during one year, Stevens, p. 236, says, "it showed a decided progress of opinion on ecclesiastical questions." In 1770, Wesley's "Minute on Calvinism" was the signal for a change. Lady Huntingdon

* See Smith, Hist. Wes. Meth. vol. i., p. 228. Stevens, Hist. of Meth. pp. 238, 344, Eng. ed.

† This remark, so far as it relates to organs, is true of England. In reference to gowns, it is true of Canada. In reference to gowns and liturgies, not Conference action, but popular sentiment, seems to have decided against them, in the United States. The "Leeds organ case," in England, when divested of extraneous matter, was a question of Conference *vs.* popular rights. See Smith, Hist. Wes. Meth., vol. iii., pp. 149, 129. Minutes of Canada Conf., 1860, p. 77. Bangs's Hist. M. E. Church, vol. i, p. 167.

‡ Stevens, Hist. Meth., Eng. ed., pp. 157, 8.

§ Stevens, p. 157. Smith, Hist. Wes. Meth., vol. i., pp. 211-12.

and her Calvinistic preachers were driven into open warfare. The Conference henceforward became, at least theoretically, distinctly Arminian. In 1780, when Benson was charged with Arianism, the discussion of the case was referred to a committee. From that time, doctrinal discussion in Conference became rare. Finally, a fixed code of Doctrines was established by the "Model Deed" of 1788 in the Sermons and Notes which are now the recognized standards of Methodist doctrine, at least in England and Canada; and the intellectual rights of the individual preachers, while officially recognized, became practically forgotten. These effects have subsequently been increased by the *practical* substitution, to a great degree, of the systematic Theology of Watson's "Institutes" for anything like a comprehensive analysis, and a consistent synthesis, of the *real* standards of Methodist theology.

That Mr. Wesley never designed that his followers should bow to his words, even in these standards, in the abject manner in which men have been compelled to subscribe to Liturgies, Creeds, Confessions, and "Disciplines," may be learned from two letters written in 1755 and 1756, to the Rev. Mr. Walker, and found in the American edition of his works, vol. vii., pp. 273–7. In these, speaking of the reasons assigned by certain persons for not subscribing to the book of Common Prayer, he says: "They think it is both "absurd and sinful to declare such an assent and consent "as is required, to *any* merely human composition."—"I "will freely acknowledge that I cannot answer these argu- "ments to my own satisfaction."—"*Your general advice on "this head, to follow my own conscience, without any regard "to consequences, or prudence, so called, is unquestionably "right;* and it is a rule which I have closely followed for "many years, and hope to follow to my life's end. The "first of your particular advices is 'to keep in full view the "interests of Christ's Church in general, and of practical "religion; not considering the Church of England, *or the "cause of Methodism*, but as subordinate thereto.' This "advice I have punctually observed from the beginning, as "well as at our late conference."—"So far as I know my- "self, I have no more concern for the reputation of "Methodism, or my own, than for the reputation of Prester "John. I have the same point in view as when I set out, "the promoting, as I am able, vital, practical religion: and "in all our discipline I still aim at the continuance of the "work which God has already begun in so many souls."

Such language is peculiarly appropriate to a time when rigid adherence to denominational peculiarities is the peril of Protestantism and Christianity.

In the "Model Deed" of the Methodist Church of Canada, the following language occurs: "The Trustees for the time "being of these presents shall—at all times—permit and "suffer the said church—to be used—and shall—at all times "hereafter,—permit—such persons as are hereinafter men-"tioned—to preach—therein. Provided always, that no per-"son or persons whomsoever shall—be permitted to preach "—in the said Church—who shall maintain—any Doctrine "*or Practice* contrary to what is contained in certain Notes on "the New Testament, commonly reputed to be the Notes of "the said John Wesley, and in the First Four Volumes of "Sermons commonly reputed to be written and published "by him."

The dogmatics, then, of Methodist pulpits, and even the "practices" of the Church, in Canada, are to be tested ultimately by these Notes and Sermons. Dr. Stevens assures us a rigid system of interpreting these standards is impossible. John Wesley himself would repudiate such rigidity. The truth of this remark will appear farther on. What has been already presented, however, in this work will show how utterly impossible, unjust, and impolitic, in view of the demands "of Christ's Church in general, and of practical religion," would be any attempt to establish this rigidity; and it may yet appear what Church holds in her hands the power to proclaim liberty to the theological captives of modern Christianity, and to lead the advance toward a comprehensive union of Protestantism against her determined and subtle foe. Our dogmatical systems are chiefly attempts to arrange in order, and explain to the Reason, the facts of Christianity. John Wesley distinctly repudiates all authoritative or persuasive enforcement of such explanations, even those of the highest embodiment of the so-called "orthodoxy," and refuses to enforce any "mystery," pressing only the authority of facts. To elicit these is the work of criticism, by the use of private judgment. This method he used, recommended, and defended.

It will be evident, from this examination of a few of the internal causes which led, during the course of years, to the formation of Methodism into a distinct denomination, that in Wesley's theology was the starting point of that formation.

CHAPTER III.

CAN IT BECOME CATHOLIC AGAIN?

To answer this question, attention must be turned to an examination of the theological standards of Methodism. These must be searched, to find their own teachings, and to ascertain their bearing on the current thought of the day.

§ I.

Wesley's Earlier and Later Views Compared.

1. The Methodist standards of doctrine contain both Wesley's early, and his later, views, which are irreconcilably antagonistic. As Dr. Stevens assures us, on page 14 of the English edition of his "History," "from their number and the great variety of subjects treated in" these standards, "a rigorous system of interpretation has become impossible." Wesley himself says, in a letter written in 1768, to the Rev. Dr. Rutherforth:* "You charge me likewise, and "that more than once or twice, with maintaining con- "tradictions. I answer, (1) If all my sentiments were "compared together, from the year 1725 to 1768, there "would be truth in the charge; for, during the latter part of "this period, I have relinquished several of my former senti- "ments. (2) During these last thirty years, I may have "varied in some of my sentiments or expressions without "observing it." He goes on to state that it could scarcely be otherwise, and to ask for "allowance" from "men of candor." His further abandonment of "former sentiments," in 1775 and 1786, has been already noticed.

It must not be forgotten that, from a single definition, the widest differences may, ultimately, be reached; and the earlier, in theological investigations, a point of divergence occurs, the farther apart must the final conclusions become. A definition of saving faith will inevitably lead to a certain view of the object of that faith, the "meritorious cause" of our salvation, or "the Atonement." From the Atonement, it is but a step to the Person of Christ which gives value to that Atonement. From the Person of Christ we necessarily arise to the nature of God, and thence to the nature of Spirit as distinct from matter, thence to the connection of the two,

* Works, vol. vii., p. 494.

the origin of human souls, and the whole subject of Creation, its development and laws. Thus, from what may be called "the simple Gospel," we are necessarily led to the grandest conceptions of the human intelligence; and we see how Christianity becomes an inspiration to human thought, and the very source of our highest progress. We can thus understand how Paul was led to represent those who regarded the doctrines of Christianity, from repentance to judgment, as the end, instead of the beginning, of our perfect development, as needing to be taught what are the first sounds of the beginning of God's utterances. These "first principles" are merely the gymnastic training ground for fields in which more daring battles are to be waged, and more glorious victories won.

It was forty-nine years from the commencement of Methodism that Mr. Wesley formed his most complete definition of "saving faith." During those years, his preachers preached, and his people believed, the definitions of his earlier life. For nearly half a century, then, his societies had been running in a certain line from which he had been gradually diverging. His earlier views had become identified with the popular thought, and were the real germs whence sprang the troubles of an after-time. The very Calvinism which he so strongly opposed arose legitimately from what he himself had believed and taught to be the truth; and that he saw this is evident from his language, first used in 1744, and repeated in 1770,—"We have leaned too much toward Calvinism." That the Calvinists perceived it is evident from the fact of Lady Huntingdon's having stigmatized Wesley as an "apostate."*

(a) The want of harmony of the Methodist standards of doctrine is noticed, first, in their views of Justification and Conversion. In Sermon V., II., 5, we read: "The plain "scriptural notion of justification is pardon, the forgive-"ness of sins. It is the act of God the Father, whereby, "for the sake of the propitiation made by the blood of his "Son, he 'showeth forth his righteousness (or mercy) by "the remission of the sins that are past.'"

In the same Sermon, III., 5, he says: "By a parity of "reason, *all works done before justification are not good*, in "the Christian sense, *forasmuch as they spring not of faith "in Jesus Christ;* yea rather,—they have the nature of sin."

* Stevens, p. 398.

In IV., 2, he says: "Justifying faith implies, not only a "divine evidence or conviction that 'God was in Christ, re- "conciling the world unto himself,' but a sure trust and "confidence that Christ died for *my* sins, that he loved *me*, "and gave himself for *me*."

In IV., 3, he says: "I cannot describe the nature of this "faith better than in the words of our own Church,—'The "only instrument of Salvation' (whereof justification is one "branch) 'is faith; that is, a sure trust that God both "hath and will forgive (*sic*) our sins, that he hath accepted "us again into his favor, for the merits of Christ's death "and passion.'"

In 4, he continues: "By affirming that this faith is the "term or *condition of justification*, I mean, first, that there "is no justification without it."

In 5, he says: "He hath no righteousness at all, ante- "cedent to this; not so much as negative righteousness, or "innocence."

From these quotations, Wesley evidently taught: (1) that justification is the act of pardon by God; (2) that this pardon is granted only to faith in Christ; (3) that the objective act of God, and the subjective realization of it, are coincident in time; (4) that prior to this act and experience, all man's deeds are sinful; and (5) that, in order to obtain pardon, we must believe that God has already pardoned us.

Compare with the foregoing quotations the following. In Sermon XI., V., 4, preached in 1767, he remarks: "Yea, "there may be a degree of long suffering, of gentleness, of "fidelity, meekness, temperance (not a shadow thereof, "but a real degree, by the preventing grace of God), "before we are 'accepted in the Beloved,' and, conse- "quently, before we have a testimony of our acceptance."

His remarks on his own conversion before he went to America, and on the case of Thos. Firmin, have already been given, and need not be repeated. His note on Acts III., 19, is: "*Be converted.* Be turned from Satan unto "God. But this term, so common in modern writings, "very rarely occurs in Scripture; perhaps not once in the "sense we now use it, for an entire change from vice to "holiness."

On Acts XI., 18, he says: "True repentance is a change "from spiritual death to spiritual life, and leads to life "everlasting."

Part of his Note on Matt. V., 3., is: "*The poor in spirit.* "They who are unfeignedly penitent, they who are truly

" convinced of sin; who see and feel the state they are in " by nature, being deeply sensible of their sinfulness, guilti- " ness, helplessness. *For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* " The present inward kingdom; righteousness and peace " and joy in the Holy Ghost, as well as the eternal kingdom, " if they endure to the end."

His conviction that the goodness of Cornelius before faith in Christ was not a mass of "splendid sins," and that the case of that centurion is a model for all similar cases the world over, whether they know Christ or not, whether they have the "word and ordinances or not," has already been alluded to, and need not be repeated. However, as the full meaning of his expressions in the authorized standards can be gathered only by a comparison of them with his contemporary writings, a few extracts from these may profitably be subjoined. In Sermon CVI., I., 10 we read: "But what is the faith which is properly saving; " which brings eternal salvation to all those that keep it " to the end? It is such a divine conviction of God, and the " things of God, as, even in its infant state, enables every " one that possesses it to 'fear God and work righteous- " ness.' And whosoever, in every nation, believes thus " far, the Apostle declares, 'is accepted of him.'"

Let it be remembered that, while Wesley shows the superiority of Christian faith over that of any other religious "dispensation," he extends the possibility of possessing this "saving faith" to Materialists, Deists, Mohammedans, Jews, Heathen, and Christians; yet this is the only definition of saving faith consistent with his notes on Cornelius. In the "Minute on Calvinism," which being issued authoritatively in 1770, must be taken as an interpretation of the views embodied in his standards of theology, Wesley says: "As to *merit* itself, of which we have " been so dreadfully afraid: we are rewarded '*accord-* " *ing to our works*,' yea, '*because of our works.*' How does " this differ from, *for the sake of our works?* And how " differs this from *secundum merita operum*, as our works " *deserve?* Can you split this hair? I doubt I cannot?" " Does not talking of a justified or a sanctified state tend " to mislead men, almost naturally leading them to trust " in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every " hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, " according to our works; according to the whole of our " inward tempers and our outward behavior."

* Stevens, p. 387.

From these extracts the following thoughts arise: (1) The principle on which pardon is granted is universal. Here is no discrimination between God's method of saving a Mohammedan, a Deist, a Materialist, a Heathen, a Jew, or a Christian,—no saving of one through faith, and another on account of "invincible ignorance." It is by faith in such features of the divine character as are universally revealed, but chiefly in Christ, who, as a man, was the only medium of revelation by which the fullness of Deity could be exhibited,—and in such features of His character as everywhere inspire respect for God, whatever may be the source of revelation of that character, and a desire to be like him in spirit and life; (2) The very first dawn of this goodness, which is the "mind that was in" Jesus, self-devotion to and for God, is, universally, and in its feeblest forms, acceptable, and acceptable simply because it is right, *secundum merita operum;* (3) Subjective and objective justification are not necessarily contemporaneous; and justification is not a transition point, before which all is crime, and after which all is virtue, but rather a sentiment of the divine mind toward us, reflected in the satisfaction of our own conscience and graduated according to the intensity with which we have become imbued with the spirit of Christ; (4) We may see from this the *logical* necessity for personal righteousness, which, on any other hypothesis, is difficult to demonstrate; (5) This view will give to many portions of the New Testament a life and a power before unknown; (6) Mr. Wesley, even in his later views, was not yet free from slight mental confusion in his views of justification subjective and justification objective, the nature of pardon not being stated or even investigated.

(*b*) The want of harmony of the Methodist standards may be seen, also, in their views of "the meritorious cause of our salvation," or the Atonement of Christ. In the Sermon on "Justification by Faith" already quoted, Mr. Wesley, speaking of the Atonement of Christ, says God "treated him as a sinner, punishing him for our sins."* His notes on Rom. III., 25, 26, are as follows: "Whom God hath set forth — "Before angels and men, *a propitiation*— To appease an "offended God. But if, as some teach, God never was "offended, there was no need of this propitiation. And if "so, Christ died in vain. *To declare his righteousness*—To "demonstrate not only his clemency, but his justice: even

* Sermons, Vol. I., p. 57, Eng. edition.

" that vindictive justice, whose essential character and prin-
" cipal office is to punish sin: *by the remission of past sins.*—
" All the sins antecedent to their believing. *For a demon-*
" *stration of his righteousness*—Both of his justice and mercy,
" *that he might be just*—Showing his justice on his own
" Son; *and yet the* merciful *justifier* of every one *that*
" *believeth in Jesus. That he might be just*—Might evidence
" himself to be strictly and inviolably righteous in the
" administration of his government, even while he is the
" merciful *justifier* of the sinner *that believeth in Jesus.*
" The attribute of justice must be preserved inviolate.
" And inviolate it is preserved, if there was real infliction
" of punishment on our Saviour. On this plan, all the
" attributes harmonize."

In Sermon XX., II., 1, he says: "There is no true faith,
" that is, justifying faith, which hath not the righteousness
" of Christ for its object." By "the righteousness of Christ," he understands Christ's living and dying, his " active and passive righteousness"; and of these he says: " And it is with regard to both these conjointly that Jesus is called 'the Lord our Righteousness.'" *

Here we have two distinct views of what is commonly understood as the Atonement, or the means by which Christ promotes reconciliation between God and men. Of the latter view, two meanings may be taken; but as Wesley used it, it is substantially the same as the former. Both views are based on the supposition that there can be no forgiveness without what may at least be regarded as an equivalent for something demanded of the offender. In the first view, we have the equivalent in the shape of the penalty due to sin. This is put in its baldest form, leaving no room for that compromise which has since been adopted by many of Wesley's followers, and which regards the Atonement not as the bearing of the actual penalty incurred, but as the endurance of suffering that derives its value from the "infinite dignity" of the sufferer. Wesley distinctly speaks of the "righteousness," passive, as well as active, as gaining its value, not from Christ's divinity, but his humanity. It is "the human righteousness of Christ." † In the second view, the equivalent is no longer merely penalty borne, but righteousness supplied. In both, the "scheme of salvation" is reduced to a commercial transaction, or an expedient to overcome a difficulty. Now, it is quite evident that either

* Serm. XX, I., 4. † Serm. XX., II., 15.

view leads directly to Calvinism or Universalism. The equivalent rendered must be for all the sins of all men, or for all the sins of some men, if it is an Atonement for all sin. If the first is true, then, unless a just God can demand a second time his equivalent, all men must eventually be saved; and so Universalism must be true. If the second alternative is the correct one, then Calvinism is true: the few atoned for must be saved, and the rest lost. Aside, then, from any will on the part of either, their fate is fixed long before they are born; and, Antinomianism being, on such a hypothesis, correct, Arminianism becomes a heresy. If it be contended that the equivalent is rendered for all the sins of men, not to secure their certain salvation, but to put them into a position whence they can, by complying with certain conditions, be saved, it must follow that he who rejects the conditions thereby commits one sin for which no atonement has been made; and so, by self-destructive reasoning, we deny that with which we started, that the atonement was for all sin. This view, by making it appear that sin is cancelled before it is committed, gives to the government of God a mechanical air which does not agree well with our highest conceptions of the Deity, while the equivalent received really leaves no place for forgiveness, and no sins to be forgiven. John Owen,* puts "this dilemma to our Universalists: God imposed "his wrath due unto, and Christ underwent the pains of "hell for, either all the sins of all men, or all the sins "of some men, or some sins of all men. If the last, "some sins of all men, then have all men some sins "to answer for, and so shall no man be saved. If the "second, that is it which we (Calvinists) affirm. If the first, "why then are not all freed from the punishment of all "their sins?"

As to the Atonement being an expedient, it must be said that such removals of obstacles always argue a want of foresight somewhere; and, in God's government, there is no room for expedients, but only for laws founded in His own nature, and in that of Creation. Besides, both theories, which, though advanced by Wesley, are anti-Wesleyan, are also *logically* subversive of all morality. Why avoid sin, if it is already atoned for? Why try for righteousness, if all that God needs has already been provided by Christ? Anything more is mere supererogation. Let us be thankful that the moral sense is

* Works, x., 259.

more powerful than logic, in the vast majority of theoretical Antinomians, and that their lives are, consequently, as pure as those of their opponents.

It is a remarkable thing that, since 1739, no distinctly Wesleyan theory of the Atonement has ever been evolved from the writings of the founder of Methodism. Every theory proposed has been a subterfuge, or has run into Calvinism. Hagenbach * states that the Methodist view, so long held, is essentially Augustinian; and the quotations from Wesley and Owen show that he cannot justly be charged with a misrepresentation.

In the sense in which Mr. Wesley himself used the foregoing definitions, he was inconsistent with the fundamental Arminianism of his system; and the latent Calvinism of his individual early views lurks in Methodism still. The revived Antinomianism of the day may, perhaps, drive that system into consistency. Take the obedience of Christ, his "active and passive righteousness," however,—his "human righteousness,"—as the exhibition of the divine character, and connect it with Wesley's last definition of saving faith,—"such a divine conviction of God, and the things of God, as, even in its infant state, enables every one that has it to 'fear God and work righteousness,' "—and we have a theory of the Atonement which is consistently Wesleyan and Arminian. Atonement will then be used in its true sense, Reconciliation; and the theory of such a "procuring cause" as may be represented as an equivalent rendered, lovingly, as a free gift by the Almighty to himself in order, in the midst of his wrath, to placate himself, and obtain from himself what he could not *freely* give until he was paid the full price for it, will give place to nobler conceptions of the principles of God's character and government; while, by sensible men, such a theory of confusion will be consigned, with its predecessor, the theory of redemption by what the historians, following Ambrose, designate as a fraud practiced upon the devil, to the museum of discarded antiquarian theological curiosities. Ambrose, quoted by Hagenbach,† says: *Oportuit hanc fraudem Diabolo fieri*, — "It was necessary that this fraud should be practiced upon the devil." When the brighter day of promise arrives, men will cease to put Christian gratitude on a heathen basis, as they will cease to illustrate the Christian view of the work of Jesus by Iphigenia and

* History of Doctrines, Vol. II., p. 504. † Hist. of Doct., I., p. 346.

Zaleucus; and the theological presentation of Christian joy will no longer inevitably recall the lines of Virgil:

——quæ sibi quisque timebat
*Unius in miseri exitium conversa tulere.**

—"What each one dreaded for himself, they bore contentedly, when it was turned over to the destruction of one poor mortal."

The subject of Wesley's variations of views; his advocacy of the perpetual virginity of Mary, his open advocacy of baptismal regeneration, &c., need not be traced further, at present.

§ 2.

The Reconciliation of the Differences.

In the fifty-three Sermons and the one volume of Notes which constitute the body of Methodist standards of divinity, there is a mass of opinions held, at different times, by the individual man who wrote them. These opinions constitute the *matter* of Wesley's theology. But, running through the whole, and tested by a comparison of the dates at which the several parts were written, will be found a systematic *method*, by the application of which the opinions of Wesley were formed. When a man subscribes to these standards, is he bound to the matter only, or is he also to recognize the method, and be guided by it? To bind a man to the matter only is to bind, not merely one man to the opinions of another, but the whole ministry of a Church, during all the time of its existence, to the views of a man like themselves. It is practically to admit that a man, limited, as all men are, by the circumstances of his time; growing mentally, as all men must, by the accumulated knowledge and developing reflection of years; influenced by constitutional infirmities and educational bias, has, nevertheless, so completely caught the meaning of the Bible that no education or talents of any individual, and no progress of coming ages, can ever hope to surpass him. Is not this practically to concede the infallibility of his judgment?

In the case in hand, it is to bind men to theories inconsistent with each other, and with the general principles of the whole system of theology under which they are ranged, and leading to consequences the most antagonistic, from stand-points the most diverse. It is certainly, as Dr.

* Æneid, Bk. II., 130, 1.

Stevens has shown, to open the door to a very wide comprehension of views, but without any hope of a reconciliation of them. It is to leave an independent thinker at the mercy of whatever phase of popular opinion on the standards may, at the time, prevail. It is to open the door for some man of sufficient force of thought to attract followers, and of more pugnacity than meekness, to cling tenaciously to his position, and rend the Church with some terrible schism. It is to subject a thoughtful man of more meekness than pugnacity to the overwhelming power of a majority whose influence, in an itinerancy, may crush him into humiliating and uncongenial positions in which his talents may be wasted. It is to close the pulpit against the highest talents, if associated with those qualities of independence and honor which, when baptized with the Holy Ghost, are the greatest ornaments of the preacher's office. It is to attempt what never can be done; for in those standards are views which few, if any, Methodist ministers hold; and to expect any one to hold them all is to expect an impossibility. Can any means be found by which order may be brought out of chaos, by which the opinions of the man may be made a basis for ascertaining the truth, and yet may not become a fetter to prevent the progress of the human mind, but may allow the same abandonment of the untenable which was exercised by the author of the standards himself?

This question can be solved only by a careful observation of Mr. Wesley's fundamental principles, and his method of developing his views, and by the adoption of that method. A great want in Methodism is a searching analysis, and a scientific classification, of the whole body of her standards of theology; but this would necessarily involve the discussion of that method which is the only connecting bond between the fragmentary and contradictory portions of the whole.

1. *One fundamental principle of this method is the exercise of private judgment.* This is observable in all Wesley's course from the beginning. It called him out from the mass of Oxford men by whom he was surrounded during his life at the University. It made him refuse to follow the Moravians even after they had been of benefit to him. It made him risk the ruin of his influence in the Church of his choice. It made him risk the permanence of his societies rather than yield to see them leavened by a theology he disliked. It made him risk the contempt of his

own age, and this one, by encountering the charge of superstition. It made him violate all the traditions of his early education when circumstances demanded their overthrow. It made him the most consistent Protestant of all in any so-called "orthodox" Church.

But it is not from his example alone that we learn his method. His writings indicate it. His note, John I., 9, is: "*Who lighteth every man*—By what is vulgarly termed "natural conscience, pointing out at least the general lines "of good and evil. And this light, if man did not hinder, "would shine more and more to the perfect day."

On 1 Corinth. XI., 18, he says: "Heresy is not, in all the "Bible, taken for 'an error in fundamentals' or in anything "else; nor schism for any separation from the outward "communion of others. Therefore both heresy and schism, "in the modern sense of the words, are sins that the Scrip- "ture knows nothing of; but were invented merely to "deprive mankind of the benefit of private judgment, and "liberty of conscience."

In Sermon CXXVIII., 26, preached in 1740, he uses the following language: "But you say you will prove it by "Scripture. Hold! What will you prove by Scripture? "that God is worse than the devil? It cannot be. What- "ever that Scripture proves, it can never prove this." "No Scripture can mean that God is not love."

Now what have we here but an acknowledgment that there are in man primitive tendencies to belief which, when the Truth is presented, instinctively perceive its truth, just as the eye sees external objects,—that the heart of man is convinced of the objective reality of what corresponds to these native and necessary instincts,—and that Scripture must be interpreted in accordance with these primitive convictions, especially when the testimony of Scripture itself is distinct on the point at issue? Here, then, is a distinct acknowledgment of the trustworthiness of our mental faculties, of our right and responsibility to use them, and evidence that this use of his own brain was one feature in the method of the man who made the acknowledgment. So fully do the heart's instincts respond to Christ's revelation that "God is Love," that, wherever Scripture seems to contradict it, the instincts of the soul must decide between conflicting interpretations.

2. *The next feature of this method is loyalty to fact.* This, also, is seen in Wesley's acts and writings. In Sermon LV., which, though not within the compass of the legal standards,

must, from the date of its publication, 1775, be regarded as an exposition of what was published in the Notes in 1754, on the subject of the Trinity, he says: "You are not re- "quired to believe any mystery." "The Bible barely "requires you to believe such facts; not the manner of "them."

"Again: 'The Word was made flesh.' I believe this "fact also. There is no mystery in it; but as to the *man-* "*ner how* he was made flesh, wherein the mystery lies, I "know nothing about it, I believe nothing about it."

In section 15, he says: "I believe this fact also (if I may "use the expression), that God is Three and One. But the "*manner how* I do not comprehend; and I do not believe "it. I believe just so much as God has revealed, and no "more. But this, the *manner*, he has not revealed; there- "fore I believe nothing about it."

The word "revealed" he uses as synonymous with "unveiled, uncovered." See section 16. That this unveiling of Truth is not confined to the Bible is evident from what has already been quoted on Conscience; but further evidence may be found in Sermon CVI., 1., 4, where he speaks of "Heathens being taught of God, "by his inward voice, *all the essentials* of true religion," evidently referring to a communication, to their minds, of the Truth, by God, but not through Scripture, or even the effects of antecedent tradition, and as evidently, solving the problem of what truth is "essential," as well as proclaiming the universality of the revelation of that essential Truth. By this distinction of fact from manner, of the comprehensible from the mysterious, he saved Joseph Benson from the danger of falling into Arianism. Mr. Wesley's use of the conditional parenthesis quoted above may be explained by this, that he recognized the verses on "the Three Witnesses" as depending for their authority upon the correctness of Bengel's reasoning. He evidently felt that on this rested the solution of the question whether the text of his Sermon was a statement of a fact, or whether the text was worthless. Hence he says, "this *fact* also (if I may use the expression)."* This, then, was Wesley's

* A reference to the Preface of this Sermon will show that, when it was prepared, Mr. Wesley had at hand no books which might have aided him in making more accurate statements; and reference to Bengel's words, even as given in Barnes's Commentary, *licet sperare codices productum iri*, will show that he merely hoped some Greek MSS. might be found to support the authority of 1 John v., 7, 8, thus giving no basis, but an illusive hope, for that authority.

second principle in ascertaining the Truth,—to receive nothing but what God has revealed as a fact, whether He has "uncovered" the fact by "natural conscience," by "his inward voice," by the outward world, or by the Scriptures.

3. *It will be seen that his method was progressive.* He ever abandoned the untenable. By facts observed, he concluded that a layman should be allowed to preach. By facts observed, he admitted the Christianity of Unitarians. By facts observed, he admitted the Christianity of Quakers, who have no outward "sacraments." By following facts, he became the greatest reformer of his age. Facts, viewed by his independent judgment, made him anticipate scientific inductions only now agitating the world. Those who speak most loudly against the doctrines of creation by evolution from pre-existent forms of matter, are, if they are Methodists, far behind the founder of their Church. His note on Hebrews XII., 9, has been corrected by a change in his views on the origin of souls. He once held, and did so when the Notes were first published, that souls originated by what may, from want of better language, be termed spasmodic acts of creation. In 1762,* he became convinced that they were evolved from the parents. By facts observed, he concluded that the lower animals have reason, as well as we. "Wesley believed that there was a regular gradation of creation from the animalcule to the archangel." "He also thought it probable that each class in the series advances, and will for ever advance."† Thus Wesley, like the scientists of to-day, took his stand in the present; but, while they scan the past, he endeavoured to forecast the future, both of them leaning to the evolution of higher from lower forms of nature. If Wesley's view differs from that of modern scientists, it is in being more "advanced" than theirs; for it seems to lean in the directions of the pre-existence of souls in a lower form of nature. By facts observed in his youth, and testified to him by persons whose words he records, but not superstitiously, as some suppose, he became convinced of what men are learning to-day, though many fear to acknowledge it, that we are not left without objective confirmation of our natural tendency to believe that a world of spirits exists about us, and that the dead are not altogether "departed." Thus, while his method made him progressive, it was also conservative, and shows the way out of that blank and cheerless materialism that threatens to wither our dearest sympathies, and drive us to the dark-

* Journal, January 27, 1762, and October 25, 1763. † Stevens, p. 700.

ness and superstition of ancient Paganism. His progress is the only true conservatism of his system.

The conclusion of this is that no one can hold all that is contained in the Wesleyan standards of doctrines; and the only question is,—on what principle those who adopt them shall make their selection. If the decision be left to caprice, endless trouble must arise. If it be decided by Methodist traditions, or by popular opinion, we shall have no security for truth except that fallacious one of the infallibility of majorities on which sacerdotalism is founded. To interpret the legal standards by the Articles of Religion or by the Systematic theology embodied in the "Discipline," by the Liturgy, or by the Hymns, is to ignore the fact that the legal standards are the ultimate test of these formularies, and are not to be tested by them. It is also simply to increase the confusion, not to lessen it. This may be seen from the fact that the second "Article" reduces Christ to a species of being different from all other species, and having under the species only the one individual, thus making of the term "Christ" a substantive designating that species, when it is truly an adjective designating a quality of the man Jesus,—the quality of being "anointed." Besides, it is directly at variance with Acts x., 38.* To make the authority of these, then, superior to that of the Notes and Sermons is to increase the evil. The only safe principle, and the only one consistent with true catholicity, is that of loyalty to fact, wherever it leads us. Loyalty to fact cannot lead astray, for truth is conformity to fact; and it is by the spirit of Truth that we are led into life eternal. This testing of the conformity to fact of all dogmatic statements, even at the cost of doing what Wesley himself often did,—abandoning his own personal views on many points,—is the only way gradually to reach the Unity of Truth amongst the inconsistent and contradictory opinions now collected together in the Methodist standards of theology. This is, to some extent, already done. Few Methodists, clergy or laity, accept the correctness of Wesley's exegesis on Romans vi., 4, and Coloss. ii., 12, where he construes "buried" into an allusion to the form of baptism. Still fewer accept the theory of baptismal regeneration, or regeneration by the Spirit through the means of baptism, taught in his notes on John iii., 5, Acts

* The words of this "Article" are: "the godhead and manhood were joined together in one person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ," &c.

XXII., 16, Rom. VI., 3, 1 Cor. XII., 13, and Coloss. II., 12. How many accept his view of Mary's perpetual virginity given in his note on Matt. I., 25? Are there any who accept all his views in his notes on the Apocalypse? The facts of Christian experience, and those elicited by biblical criticism, are against these notes; and the notes are disregarded in presence of the opposing facts.

The demands of Christianity to-day may lead us to a wider application of Wesley's method than either he or his followers have ever made.

§3.

The Test of Fact.

It has been seen that Wesley's method was the use of his private judgment, and loyalty to the facts obtained in the course of his continued investigation of Truth. But how can any one ascertain whether a dogma corresponds to a fact?

1. *By actual comparison of the dogma with the fact to which it is supposed to correspond.* Take, for instance the dogma of human depravity. Whether this is true or not, and, if true, in what sense it is so, must be decided by a reference to humanity and the facts it presents. The shape of the earth is not to be decided by ecclesiastical authority, but by measurements and voyages; and the relative importance, in the solar system, of our present abode cannot be decided by any authority but one whose utterances are based on the investigation of facts. The bearing of the decision of such questions on any pre-conceived system of theology or ecclesiasticism must never be taken into account. The only question of importance is,—what are the facts? The consequences of the answer must not be allowed for a moment to interfere with the investigation, further than to guard us against carelessness or haste in our search for facts.

2. *Where the particular fact is beyond our reach, the comparison must be instituted between the statement and the general principles under which the particular fact must be placed.* In any dogma relating to the essential nature of the divine Spirit, the truth must be tested by our knowledge of the general laws of spirit. Anything predicated of a single mind must be tested by the general laws of mind, where the particular mind is beyond our observation. Psychology thus becomes a clue to certain problems in

theology; and the solution of the question whether, in the divine mind, there exists a threefold distinction under the essential unity can be determined finally only by a profound analysis of the nature and laws of all mental and spiritual existence. It is a problem, therefore, of metaphysics.

3. *In cases where both the particular fact and the general principles which embrace it are beyond our reach, the correspondence of any statement with the fact it is taken to represent may be proved by the competence of the testimony which communicates it to us.* The possibility of seeing the Southern Cross is, to most people, very remote; but he would be guilty of worse than credulity who should reject the testimony of the many who profess to have seen that constellation. This is the weakest of the three methods of testing a fact, and savors more of credulity than of that faith which personal investigation produces, and which is all the knowledge we have here; yet credulity is not always an evil, and often anticipates faith. To be credulous is to be ready to believe; and there is a readiness to believe which is more blessed than scepticism, and even more blessed than the faith which is based upon sight. Rare gifts, in poetry and in religion, often anticipate great truths which observation afterwards confirms; and practical life demands the acceptance of them simply on the authority of him who utters them, or on an inward assurance of their truth, long before they are confirmed by observation. This acceptance of testimony is, in practical life, of more frequent necessity than personal observation; but it can easily be perceived that the safety of the blind depends largely upon the trustworthiness of those who lead them; and, in questions of life and death, as all religious questions are, the blind should not trust to any leader who cannot be absolutely relied upon.

This acceptance of testimony may be traced, deeper than mere testimony, to the very convictions of our nature; for nature compels us to believe that good men will not willingly be false, and that multitudes of independent observers of the same facts, when they unite in their assurances, may be taken as worthy of our confidence.

This method of testing dogmas implies that the individual Reason is the final court of appeal. In personal investigation, whether of particular facts or general laws, all our knowledge of Truth depends upon the trustworthiness of our mental faculties; and to this court all questions

must *ultimately* come. In choosing testimony, its competence must be decided by Reason. The most skilled Romanist theologian appeals, as a last resort, to this, in his effort to make the authority of his Church axiomatic. To this, the Protestant appeals finally, when he essays to do for the Bible what the Romanist does for his Church,—present it as an infallible guide whose correctness none dare question. It is idle, therefore, for Romanist or Protestant to represent such a method as "Rationalistic." So far as the term "Rationalism" is taken to mean a rejection of the supernatural, — or, as the word "supernatural" seems to mean, super-material,—it is not Rationalism at all, inasmuch as it irrationally ignores a mass of facts which have been presented to the world in all nations and all ages, as well as those natural instincts which compel a belief in the existence of a realm of being not subject to the limits of material nature. So far as the word Rationalism means the employment of Reason as a passive recipient of communications from without, or an active agent in the discovery of Truth, working by generalizations of facts based on its own native and necessary convictions, Romanism is as Rationalistic as Protestantism. To allude to the language of Cardinal Manning, in his "Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost," we may say that the Romish theologian is quite as much a "critic" of revelation, before he yields himself as a "disciple" of it as the Protestant. Before the former yields to his Church, he criticises its claims, if he is intelligent; and after the latter has satisfied himself that anything is a revelation from God, he yields himself to it as fully as the other. Rome and Protestantism diverge only from the point where each finds the authority to which it is henceforth to submit: up to that point, the method of each is the same. The point at which Wesley's Reason yielded to Faith was God's revelation of a fact. Farther than this, he did not insist that others should go. Beyond this, he left terms, definitions, and philosophical speculations, to the individual judgment.

Enough has now been said to show that the main question of this chapter cannot be answered without an examination of Wesley's relation to what is commonly called "orthodoxy." To this we must now turn.

§4.

"*Orthodoxy.*"

During the early Christian centuries, a mass of speculative dogmas accumulated in the minds of thinking men, and assumed the name of "orthodoxy." There never have been wanting men whose words and lives, even when their own views were wrong, have been a standing protest against this appropriation of a good name by a system of thought which their intelligence rejected, and which brought upon them, for their rejection of it, some of the most severe afflictions a Christian heart can bear. This assumption and these protests have continued to this day. A careful observation of the thoughts ranged on both sides reveals a common substratum of Christian facts. These facts form the real orthodoxy,—the fundamentals of Christian opinion which distinguish Christianity from every other religion in the world. The definitions, systematic groupings, and explanations of them which have, at various times and in various places, prevailed, constitute our different "theologies." The facts may be grouped under four heads,—Trinity, Incarnation, Atonement, and Retribution. The Trinity implies three agents in the work of saving men from sin. The Incarnation implies the embodiment, in some sense, of God in Jesus Christ. The Atonement implies a reconciliation between God and man through Jesus Christ. Retribution implies rewards and punishments, in a future state, of virtue and vice in this life. The question is being forced upon Christianity, is any given explanation of these thoughts necessary to catholicity? Are any of the current explanations of them to be regarded as the Revelation of God? Has the Bible distinctly unfolded any such explanation, or has it but revealed the facts? Especially, has it revealed, as the Truth of God, that system of explanations which has assumed the title of "orthodoxy?" In any case, what is the relation of Wesley's theology to that system? To answer these questions, an appeal must be made to the facts of History, Church authority, Christian consciousness, the Bible, and the Methodist theological standards. In this, however, the design is not to uphold any one theory, but to show that no one is absolutely necessary to real orthodoxy, or to Wesleyan principles. The historical facts are locked up from the public in large volumes whose number

and cost prevent them from being widely read. Mere allusions to these works, then, could not secure a consultation of them by the masses; and unsupported statements would not have the weight which actual quotations would give. The style of preaching which the popular taste demands prevents any education of the people into an intelligent comprehension of the questions at issue, through the medium of the pulpit. At the risk, consequently, of appearing to burden the reader with quotations, some extracts from standard writers must be given at length. The extracts will be made from the works of none but "orthodox" writers, and works which are recognized text-books in Methodist colleges, theological schools, and courses of study, especially in Canada and the United States.

I.

"ORTHODOXY" TESTED BY HISTORY.

1. *Extracts from Hagenbach's "History of Doctrines."*

In presenting only such of these as are necessary, the brevity demanded will produce an abruptness in the transitions from one to another.

(*a*) Puzzled, as our modern thinkers are, by the difficulty of reconciling the ideas of the Absolute and the Infinite in God with his relations to a finite creation, the ancients, in their speculations, conceived the thought of a medium by which creation was effected. Referring to this medium, Hagenbach says: "We find traces of it in the more definite and concrete form which, at the time when the apocryphal writings were composed, was given to the personification of the divine Word and the divine Wisdom found in the Old Testament, especially, however, in the doctrine of Philo concerning the Logos, and in some other ideas then current." * "This Logos is poetically personified in several places." "Like the Word, the Wisdom of God is personified." "On the question whether Philo ascribed personality to the Logos, — while most writers reply in the affirmative, Dorner entertains the opposite opinion." "According to Philo, the Logos is the essence and seat of the ideal world (the ideal of ideals). As an artist first forms a model of that which he purposes to make, so God first shaped the world ideally." † "That

* Vol. I., p. 114. † I. p. 115.

Philo frequently personifies the Logos does not necessarily imply that he ascribes to him a real hypostasis." "The doctrine of an intermediate being between God and the world is a part of the theology of the Talmud; but this intermediate being is there designated, not by the name of the Word, but by that of the Shekinah." * "Before the doctrine of the Trinity was further developed, the Logos was considered by the orthodox church to be the *only* hypostasis."† "The apostolic fathers make no use of the doctrine of the Logos, but adhere to simple aphoristic and undeveloped declarations about the divine dignity of Christ."‡ "In the writings of Clement (of Alexandria) the Logos is superior to men and angels, but subordinate to the Father."§ On page 121, 2, Hagenbach quotes from Tertullian. Some sentences may be thus translated. "Before all things God was alone; to himself he was world and place and everything. But he was alone because there was nothing external to him. Yet he was not even then alone; for he had with him what he had in himself, namely, his reason, &c. For he brought forth God the Word, just as a root brings forth a shrub, a fountain a stream, the sun a ray,—since these things, also, are a development of those substances from which they proceed." "In chap. 9, the Son is even called a *portion* of the Father." "We find in Tertullian, on the one hand, the effort to hold fast the entire equality of the Father and the Son—on the other hand the inequality is so manifestly conceded or pre-supposed; it is everywhere expressed in so marked, and, as it were, involuntary a way, and it strikes its roots so deeply into his whole system and modes of expression that it must, doubtless, be considered as the real and inmost conception of Tertullian's system." ‖ "After *Tertullian* had employed the term Son in reference to the personality of the Logos more distinctly than had previously been done, *Origen* decisively adopted this terminology, and was led to the idea of an eternal generation. Though he kept clear with all strictness from any notion of physical emanation, yet he was, on the other hand, pressed to a subordination of the Son to the Father. Consequently his definitions by no means satisfied the consciousness of the church."¶ "He also considers the generation of the Son as *eternal*, because God did not at any time begin to be a father, like fathers among men."

* I., p. 116. † I., p. 118. ‡ I., p. 119. § I., p. 119.
‖ I., pp. 121-2. ¶ I., p. 123.

"Particularly was the expression 'Son of God' which, in the New Testament, is undeniably used in respect to the historical Christ, *confounded with the metaphysical and dogmatic usage of the schools.*" "It (the subordination of the Son to the Father) is a necessary aid in the substitution of several actual hypostases in God for the doctrine of the Logos, as previously held, which only vaguely maintained the distinction of hypostases in God."* "As soon, however, as the attempt was made to go beyond the Trinity of revelation (*i. e.*, the Trinity as it manifests itself in the work of redemption), and to conceive of the essence of the Holy Spirit in itself, and the relation in which he stands to the Father and the Logos, difficulties sprang up, the solution of which became problems of speculative theology. By some, the Wisdom of the Old Testament, *from which the doctrine of the Logos was developed*, was called 'the Holy Spirit,' and made co-ordinate with the Word. Others either identified the Logos with the Spirit, or expressed themselves in a vague manner as to the distinction between them, and the Holy Ghost (impersonally viewed) appears as a mere divine attribute, gift, or agency. But the pressure of logical consistency led gradually to the view of the personality of the Holy Ghost, and his definite distinction from the Logos."† "It is not to be forgotten that the *trias of revelation* was held in a complete form long before the church came to clear statements about the *essential trias.*"‡ Theophilus, one of the so-called "Church Fathers," quoted by Hagenbach, § says, (in the second Christian century), "This Word, being the spirit of God, &c., descended upon the prophets." This passage shows that the message, or "Word of the Lord," which came to the prophets in old times, had, in the time of Theophilus, been invested with personality, and was by him confounded with the spirit of God, thus presenting the fact that duality and not Trinity was the orthodoxy of this "father." Of Justin Martyr, the great Christian apologist, Duncker, quoted by Hagenbach, says: "—but still it is none the less true that his philosophical principles, logically carried out, lead only to a dyas (or duality in the Godhead), and that he could not doctrinally establish the difference between the Son and the Spirit." "*Origen* acknowledges the personality of

* I., p. 124. † I., p. 125.
‡ I., p. 127, Note 4. § Vol. I., p. 127.

the Holy Spirit, but subordinates him to both the Father and the Son, by the latter of whom he is *created* like all other things, though distinguished from all other creatures by divine dignity."* "The belief in the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost* belonged to the *regula fidei*, even apart from any speculative development of the doctrine of the Logos, and appears in what is commonly called the Apostles' creed, in this historico-epic form, *without being summed up in a unity*. The Greek word *trias* was first used by Theophilus; the Latin term *trinitas*, of a more comprehensive doctrinal import, is found in Tertullian." Hagenbach gives an extract from *Theophilus*, to the following effect: "The three days before the creation of the luminaries have become types of the *trias* of God, his Word, and his Wisdom. But for a fourth type, is man, &c. So that there may be God, the Word, Wisdom, Man." "Here we have indeed the word *trias*, but not in the ecclesiastical sense of the term Trinity; for as *man* is mentioned as the fourth term, it is evident that the *trias* cannot be taken here as a perfect whole, consisting of three joined in one; besides, the term Wisdom is used instead of *the Holy Spirit*."† "The strict distinction which was drawn between the hypostases (persons) in the Trinity led, in the first instance, to that system of *Subordination* in which the Son was made inferior to the Father, and the Holy Spirit to both the Father and the Son."‡ *Tertullian* "expressly appeals to the point that Christ did not say that he and the Father were one (*unus*, masculine), but one (*unum*, neuter); and he refers this unity to a moral relation —the love of the Father and the obedience of the Son."§

These quotations refer to the period between 80 A.D. and 254 A.D.: A few must now be given between 254 A.D. and 730 A.D. "Orthodoxy, however, prevailed at last, partly from an internal necessity," and partly from "the combination of political power and monkish intrigues."‖ "In proportion to the development of ecclesiastical orthodoxy into fixed and systematic shape, was the loss of individual freedom in respect to the formation of doctrines and the increased peril of becoming heretical."¶ "The Nicene Creed decided nothing concerning the Holy Spirit." "But *Athanasius* correctly *inferred from his premises* the divinity of the Holy Spirit." Gregory of Nazianzum 380 A.D., says: "Some of the wise men

* I., p. 128. † I., p. 129. ‡ I., p. 130. § I., p. 131.
‖ I., p. 228. ¶ I., p. 229.

amongst us regard the Holy Spirit as an energy, others think that he is a creature, some again that he is God himself; and, lastly, there are some who do not know what opinion to adopt, from reverence, as they say, for the Sacred Scriptures, because *they* do not teach anything definite on this point." *Hilary* "could not find any passage in Scripture in which the name '*God*' was given to the Holy Spirit."* Gregory of Nazianzum "acknowledged that the doctrine was not expressly contained in Scripture, and therefore thought that we must go beyond the letter itself." "He, himself, showed that the Holy Spirit is neither a mere power, nor a creature, and, accordingly, that there is no other alternative except that he is God himself." "The want of a sufficiently definite interpretation of Scripture was one of the chief hindrances to the recognition of the consubstantiality (Homousia) of the Son. To conduct the proof from depths of Christian consciousness appeared to many too adventurous."† "At the third synod of Toledo (589 A.D.) the clause *filioque* ('and from the Son') was added to the confession of faith of the council of Constantinople."‡ "The doctrine of the church concerning the Trinity appears most fully developed and defined in a perfect symbolical form in what is called the *symbolum quicunque* (commonly but *erroneously* called the creed of St. Athanasius). By its repetition of positive and negative propositions, its perpetual assertion, and then again, denial of its positions, the mystery of the doctrine is presented, as it were, in hieroglyphics, as if to confound the understanding."

(*b*) "The doctrine of the devil occupied during the period a prominent place in Soteriology, inasmuch as *Gregory of Nyssa* and other theologians still maintained the notion previously held that God defrauded the devil by a dishonest exchange." "The train of his argument is as follows: Men have become slaves of the devil by sin. Jesus offered himself to the devil as the ransom which should release all others. The crafty devil assented, because he cared more for the *one* Jesus, so much superior to them, than for all the rest. But, notwithstanding his craft, he was deceived, since he could not retain Jesus in his power. It was, as it were, a deception on the part of God that Jesus veiled his Divine nature, which the devil would have feared, by means of his humanity, and thus deceived the devil by the appearance of flesh." "It was necessary, in order that *this fraud* should be practiced on the devil, that Jesus should take a

* I., p. 259. † I., p. 261. ‡ I., p. 263.

body, that this body should be corruptible and infirm, so that from its infirmity it might be crucified."* "In proportion as the death (of Christ) is referred to the divine causality, Christ's death is viewed as punishment for human sin, as the bearing of the curse, and is, consequently referred to the divine justice. A theory of satisfaction begins to be developed."† "To set aside the devil, *Athanasius* put *personified death* in his place, which was deceived in the same way."‡ "*Thomasius* gives a full view of the theory of Athanasius, as the most important in the patristic literature—summed up: The Logos assumed a mortal body, in order thus to fulfill the law for us, to bring the vicarious sacrifice, to destroy death, to give immortality, and so to restore the divine image in humanity. His death was 'the death of all,' 'the death of humanity,'" &c.§ The theory of *Anselm of Canterbury* "is in substance as follows: In order to restore the honor of which God was deprived by sin, it was necessary that God should become man; that, by voluntary submission to the penalty of death, he might thus, as God-man, cancel the debt, which, beside him, no other being, whether a heavenly one or an earthly one, could have paid. And he not only satisfied the requirements of divine justice, but, by so doing, of his own free will, he did more than was needed, and was rewarded by obtaining the deliverance of man from the penalty pronounced upon him. Thus the apparent contradiction between divine love on the one hand, and divine justice and benevolence on the other, was adjusted."‖ "The doctrines of the church were gradually developed in the lapse of ages." "*Abélard* was accused of heresy for contesting the *right* of the devil to man."¶ "Thus the two representatives of scholasticism, in its first period, when it developed itself in all its youthful vigor, Anselm and Abélard, were directly opposed to each other, with respect to the doctrines of redemption and atonement. The one considered the last ground of it to be the divine justice, requiring an infinite equivalent for the infinite guilt of sin, that is, a necessity founded in the nature of God; the other held it to be the free grace of God, which, *by kindling love in the breast of man, blots out sin, and with sin its guilt.*"** *Duns Scotus* is quoted on p. 51. The following is a translation: "For Christ was meritorious not so far as he was God, but so far as he was man. Hence if you demand how

* I., p. 346. † I., p. 347. ‡ I., p. 348. § I., p. 349.
‖ II., p. 41. ¶ II., p. 43. ** II., pp. 47, 8.

valuable the merit of Christ was, according to its sufficiency, doubtless it was of value so far as it was accepted by God. Since divine acceptance is the most powerful cause and reason of all merit—the merit of Christ was of sufficient value so far as the Trinity was able and willing to accept it." "Thus he (*Duns Scotus*) destroyed the principal argument of Anselm's theory in his 'Cur Deus Homo?'"* "While *Anselm* did not go beyond the simple fact of Christ's death, Aquinas endeavored to demonstrate that Christ endured in his head, hands, and feet, *all the sufferings* which men have to endure in their reputation, worldly possessions, body, and soul, in head, hands, and feet; accordingly, *the pain of the sufferings of Christ is by far the greatest* which can be endured in the present life. Nevertheless *his soul possessed the uninterrupted enjoyment* of blessedness. *Aquinas* considers that Christ need not, and could not, suffer" eternal punishment; "the dignity of his person, and his voluntary sacrifice were sufficient."† "Protestantism could not absolutely withdraw itself from the power of tradition. *For even the authority of Scripture rested upon the belief of the church.* But even in relation to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, Protestantism declared its agreement with the oldest creeds of the church. But with all its *theoretical* opposition to any other authority than that of Scripture, Protestantism soon came to be dependent upon its own tradition; for the words of Luther, and the declarations of the confessions of faith, became a standard and restraint in the subsequent exegetical and doctrinal development."‡ "As Protestants and Roman Catholics agreed in resting their doctrines concerning theology and christology on the basis of the œcumenical symbols (the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene, and the Athanasian), so they espoused in common the doctrine of atonement as given in Anselm's theory of satisfaction, only with this difference, that the Prostestants gave the preference to that aspect of this theory presented by Thomas Aquinas, while the Roman Catholics were favorable to the scheme of Duns Scotus." The Protestants "so extended the idea of vicarious suffering as to make it include the divine curse (*mors æterna*—eternal death), an opinion which was combated by the divines of the Roman Church."

(*c*) On the future state, Hagenbach says: "All writers admitted the difficulty of forming just views on this subject. The sufferings of the damned were represented as the

* II., p. 51. † II., p. 50. ‡ II., pp. 248-9.

opposite of the pleasures of the blessed; and, in the descriptions of the punishments of hell, greater prominence was given to gross sensuous representations. Many were disposed to regard the fire in question as a material fire. There were still some theologians who favored the idea of degrees both of bliss and torture. Concerning the duration of the punishments of hell the opinion was more general that they were eternal; but yet *Arnobius* maintained that they would at last cease, though with the annihilation of the individual; and even the Origenistic humanity, in a few of its representatives, still dared to express a glimmer of hope in favor of the damned. *Jerome*, at least, admitted that those among the damned who have been *orthodox*, enjoy a kind of privilege."*

(d) "The New Testament does not contain the idea of *Sacrament*, as such. Baptism and the Lord's Supper were not instituted by Christ as two connected rites, but each in its own place and time, without a hint of a relation of the one to the other."† "As *Tertullian*, generally speaking, is the author of the later terminology (New Testament, Trinity, original sin, satisfaction), so *he* is the first writer who uses the phrase, sacrament of baptism and the eucharist." "Tertullian also uses the word sacrament in a more general way."‡ "The idea of the Holy Sacraments was more precisely defined and limited in this period (from A.D. 254 to 730); they are the organs by which the church works upon the individual Christian, and transmits the fullness of divine life, which dwells within it, to the members."§

2. *Extracts from Kurtz's "Church History."*

(A text-book in the Methodist Colleges of Cobourg and Montreal.)

(a) "In its friendly or hostile contact with heathen culture, Christianity had to appear in a *scientific* form, in order thus, also, to prove its claim to recognition as a universal religion. During the three first centuries, however, the dogmas of the Catholic Church were not yet fully formed and established." ‖ "The real essence of the Deity was rather ascribed to the Father, and all the attributes of divinity were not assigned to the Son in the same manner as to the Father." "The views entertained about the Holy Ghost were even more vague. His personality

* I., p. 376. † I., p. 212. ‡ I., p. 211.
§ I., p. 355. ‖ I., p. 141.

and independent existence were not subjects of settled or deep conviction; it was more common to subordinate him."* "The acknowledgment of the equality of being of the Son, with the Father—as yet was left out of the orthodox view," was "propounded in the third century, but —found general acknowledgment only in the fourth century."† "*Origen* was the first to propound the truth that the Son is begotten by the Father from all eternity, and hence from all eternity a hypostasis."‡

(b) In the period from 100 A. D. to 323, the dogma of the Lord's Supper "was not clearly developed, although it was generally realized that the Lord's Supper was a most holy mystery, and indispensible food of eternal life, that the body and blood of the Lord were mystically connected with the bread and wine." "When once the idea of a priesthood had gained a footing, the cognate notion of sacrifice could not for any time be kept out."§

3. *Extracts from Westcott's "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels."*

After quoting many passages from the book of Henoch, written between 107 B. C. and 144 B. C., showing that writer's view of the humanity of Messiah, and his pre-existence in the divine purpose and choice, Westcott says: "But while Messiah is thus represented as man, and, perhaps, classed among created things, He stands far above all in the greatness of His gifts."‖ "In the Book of Proverbs, Wisdom appears in some degree to fill up the chasm between God and the world." "Meanwhile the growing belief in an angel-world, composed of beings of the most different natures and offices, gave consistency to the idea of a Power standing closer to God than the mightiest among the created hosts. The doctrine thus grounded fell in exactly with the desire of *the philosophic interpreters of Scripture* to remove from the text the anthropomorphic representations of the Supreme Being; and, with varied ingenuity, and deep insight into the relations of the creature and the Creator, the finite and the infinite, they *constructed the doctrine of the Word* (Logos). The belief in a divine Word, a mediating power by which God makes himself known to men in action and teaching, was not confined to any one school at the time of Christ's coming. It found acceptance alike at Jerusalem

* I., p. 142. † I., p. 143. ‡ I., p. 144. § I., p. 123. ‖ P. 123.

and Alexandria, and moulded the language of the Targums, as well as the speculations of Philo. But there was a characteristic difference in the form which the belief assumed. In Palestine, the Word appears, like the Angel of the Pentateuch, as the medium of the outward communication of God with men; in Egypt, as the inner power by which such communication is rendered possible. The one doctrine tends towards the recognition of a divine Person subordinate to God (yet created); the other, to the recognition of a twofold personality in the divine essence."* "The very title, Logos, with its twofold meaning, speech and reason, was a fruitful source of ambiguity; and this first confusion was increased by the tempting analogies of Greek philosophy in conflict with *the Hebrew faith in the absolute unity of God.* As a necessary consequence, the Logos is described under the most varied forms. At one time, it is the mind of God in which the archetypal world exists, as the design of an earthly fabric in the mind of the architect. At another time, it is the inspirer of holy men, the spring and food of virtue. At another time, it is the Son of God, the First-born, all-pervading, all-sustaining, and yet personally distinct from God. At another time the conception of two distinct divine personalities yields to the ancient dogma, and the Logos, while retaining its divine attributes, is regarded only as a special conception of God, as reasoning, acting, creating."† "It is impossible to decide absolutely that Philo attributed to the Word a personal and divine essence." "The Word is neither an emanation nor a created being, but rather God himself under a particular form."‡ "In the Latin versions of the New Testament, as represented by MSS. of every class, *Logos* is translated by *Verbum*, which falls very far short even of a partial rendering of the Greek. There is, however, evidence that, in the second century, *sermo* was also current, which is, in some respects, a preferable rendering; and Tertullian seems to prefer *ratio*, though he implies that that had not been adopted in any version."§

4. *Extracts from Withrow's "Catacombs of Rome."*

"'The Holy Trinity,' says Dr. Northcote, 'is nowhere represented, as far as I know, in the paintings of the Catacombs.'"‖ "Throughout the whole range of sacred

* P. 161. † P. 163. ‡ P. 165. § P. 265. ‖ P. 354.

mosaics at Rome from the fourth to the fourteenth century, according to Mr. Hemans, the Supreme Being is never represented except symbolically by means of a hand, usually holding a crown over the head of Christ, the Virgin, or the Saints."* "But this grossness of treatment reaches its most offensive development in the impious attempt to symbolize the sublime mystery of the Holy Trinity by a grotesque figure with three heads, or a head with three faces joined together, somewhat after the manner of the three-headed image of Brahma in the Hindoo mythology. In other examples, the Trinity is represented by three harsh, stiff, and aged figures." †

REFLECTIONS ON THE EXTRACTS.

1. The real must be distinguished from the conventional in orthodoxy. Orthodoxy, in the Roman Church, properly covers the whole realm of human thought: in Protestantism, it covers only a certain set of subjects which has not been very clearly defined. Some persons, as will be seen further on, include under the head of Orthodoxy even the "Sacraments," as Baptism and the Lord's Supper have come to be called, thus excluding from the Church of God the "Friends" or Quakers. A few extracts on this part of the whole subject have been inserted, to show that the general law of development applicable to the other parts is true in it, also; but it would be a wrong to the mass of Protestants to hold them responsible for views which they repudiate. Orthodoxy, then, as held by most Protestants, may be grouped under the four heads, — Trinity, Incarnation, Atonement, and Retribution. An analysis of the extracts given from Hagenbach, Kurtz, and Westcott will show a difference between the *thoughts* of Christians on these subjects, and the *explanations* given of those thoughts at various times. In this distinction lies the only hope of a reconciliation between Christians of different views. It will be found that the underlying thought of nearly all, if not all, who ever desire the name of Christian is much the same, while any attempt to define and explain the thought creates a diversity, at once, from the defects of language, the varieties of individual culture and ability to express what is thought, and from the influence of current opinion on the forms of expression

* P. 357. † P. 360.

used. The *thought* must be as permanent as Christianity itself: the *expression* must bear the stamp of locality and time; hence the more our creeds leave general principles, and descend to details of explanation and definition, the less are they suited to a catholic, universal, and permanent Church.

Real Orthodoxy recognizes a threefold agency in the development of human purity and perfection; and these three are called the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. I prefer to use here the word Spirit; for "Ghost" begs a question which is a point of controversy. That point is personality, distinctness of conscious existence and character. Real Orthodoxy also recognizes the manifestation of God in Jesus Christ; and this it designates by the term Incarnation. It acknowledges that in and through Jesus Christ a reconciliation is produced between God and man: this it calls the Atonement. It is convinced that in the future life, as well as in this, virtue is rewarded, and vice is punished; and this it designates Retribution.

Conventional Orthodoxy defines the three agents in redemption as hypostases, or persons, in the essence of one Deity, thus leading men into the subject of essences of spirits, a subject of which we know but little, and which can have but a remote bearing on the questions of practical life. The term hypostasis, or person, it defines, at times, as an individuality having distinct consciousness and will; and, at other times, to avoid tri-theism, it loses itself in an ineffectual attempt to give any intelligible definition of the term, urging its acceptance as a mystery to be believed without any clear idea of what it is. It represents the Incarnation as the embodiment of one of these hypostases in the human form of Jesus of Nazareth. It represents the Atonement, not as reconciliation, but as that act of Christ which promoted the reconciliation; and that act, it represents as a substitution of his righteousness for that which men should have given, and of his sufferings for those which men should have endured. It is not distinct in its utterances as to the nature of future reward and punishment; but it is unanimous in the conviction that these never end, and that neither one nor the other is the annihilation of the soul's conscious and individual existence. On the nature of future punishment, conventional orthodoxy is less definite, and more negative than on either of the other points; and it is, therefore, less open to controversy on Retribution than on the Trinity, the Incarnation, or the Atonement. The

Orthodoxy which is upheld by authority and ecclesiastical force is not the real and fundamental, but the conventional; and, because it is conventional, it is the source of division. The question to be discussed here is not,—is it true or false? —but, can it be made a basis for a catholic Church? This can be decided, partly, by an examination of its origin and development.

2. "Orthodoxy," as commonly understood, is the outgrowth of philosophical speculation. (*a*) There was a time when it did not exist. The elements of thought which ultimately proved to be the germs of it were in existence at the time of Christ; but neither in the consciousness of Christians, nor in the oral tradition which preceded the written gospels, nor in the opinions taught by the earliest followers of Jesus, do we find any distinct statement of those theories or explanations which are now known by the name of "Orthodoxy." The text, 1 John v., 7, 8, is now proved beyond a doubt to be an interpolation. The earliest records in the Catacombs show an utter ignorance of this scholastic theology, if they do not contradict it. The Apostles' Creed knows nothing of these hypostases, or the unity of the three agents, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. (*b*) The time of its commencement is definitely fixed. It arose from the second great conflict in which Christianity became engaged. The first conflict was with Judaism. The second was between the Aryan and the Semitic mind, and arose from the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. The thoughts which were brought out by the first are found in some of the writings of Paul, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Those evolved by the second are found in the Gospel of John and in all subsequent Christian literature. The Semitic mind delights in materialistic imagery and the personification of characters and principles. The Aryan, or Indo-European, mind delights in abstract thought and scientific classification. When these diverse forms of intelligence came into contact, a necessity arose for a scientific presentation of Christian truth. From Westcott we learn that Arianism may be traced to Palestine, and Trinitarianism to Alexandria, while both found their origin in the language and thought of the Talmuds. (*c*) The progress of its growth is equally marked. Beginning with the proclamation of the personality of the Holy Spirit,—the last stage of progress in the development of Trinitarianism,—we find the three hypostases on a footing of equality. Going back, we find the hypostases

subordinated to each other. Retreating again, we find it doubtful whether there is a trace of any distinction between hypostases. Back farther, we find but one hypostasis. Back still farther, we find the hypostatic or personal Logos vanish into a figure of speech, the "Wisdom" of the Old Testament, and the message, or Word, of the Lord, communicated to the Prophets, being spoken of as if they were living beings. From the inextricable confusion and incomprehensible contradictions of the so-called Athanasian creed, then, we trace the whole of this Orthodoxy back to a rhetorical figure; and, if we like to look forward to its imposition upon the world as identical with the Truth, we find it upheld by speculation, conscientious zeal, diplomacy, "political power, and monkish intrigues."

3. It leads to Sacerdotalism. The method of its growth does not necessarily lead to the view that the conventional orthodoxy ultimately predominant is false. By whomsoever promoted, or by whatever means triumphant, it may yet be true. (It is the logical outgrowth of certain premises; and if these are true, the conclusion must be right, however it may confound common sense, and by whatever methods it has prevailed.) Taking for granted, then, that it is correct, it logically leads to that system of "Church" authority for which no more appropriate title seems to be found than "Sacerdotalism."

II.

Can "Orthodoxy" rest on Church Authority?

A remarkable confirmation of the fact here presented, that the identification of patristic dogmas with divine truth necessarily leads to the doctrine of the infallibility of the Church, is seen in the "Methodist Quarterly Review" for October, 1876, page 738.

"Woe to the man who 'will not hear the Church.' For, "first, the Church is the great author, preserver, and inter-"preter of the Word. The volume of the book of the "Word has lain in the ark of even the corruptest Church "of Christendom. Based on it, secondly, and found in it, "is a great outline type of holy doctrine: The Trinity, "the Atonement, the Sacraments, and Retribution, from "which no private interpretation must vary. In that "great TYPE of doctrine, and even in one great type "of ecclesiastical organization, Irenæus, Chrysostom, and

" John Wesley essentially agree. There is a great truth " contained in the profound maxim, *What has everywhere " and always been believed by those who hold the supremacy of " the Word is true.* This may not apply in exegesis. There " may be texts which the great body of the Church have " wrongly interpreted. There may have been tenets in " regard to physical and cosmical things, and outside the " limits of pure theology, in which every individual of the " Church was mistaken. But within her limits the Church " does not err."

On page 737, Dr. Whedon thus defines the Word: "The " Word is the great current of spiritual thought running " through the written text."

Here it must be noticed that Dr. Whedon's meaning of the "Word," is one which was held by some in the early Church, but is not the one now held by the majority of Christians. Who can define the limits of "spiritual thought?" It is founded on historical, and even scientific, thought; and, if the psychological and historical thought on which the spiritual is built is not also the Word, how can we be assured of a superstructure which rests on so insecure a foundation? Certainly by no means indicated by Dr. Whedon. His view simply amounts to saying that the Bible contains the Word, but is not itself, as a whole, that Word. This view is not without strong evidence in its favor, even in the Wesleyan Catechism, which says the Word is "contained in the Scriptures." We must, however, if we identify the Bible with the Word of God, take the Bible as a whole, or much confusion will arise.

Again, Dr. Whedon teaches: (1) that the authority of the Bible, and the interpretation of it, rest upon the authority of the Church which is its author and preserver; (2) that this Church is, in the sphere of "pure theology," practically, if not theoretically, infallible. It "*does not* err," whether it *can* do so, or not; (3) that this sphere embraces the Trinity, the Atonement, the Sacraments, and Retribution. So long as Dr. Whedon does not openly dissent from the so-called "orthodox" views of these subjects is it doing him an injustice to take for granted that he accepts them? If he does *not* accept them, the remarks here made lose their force. It is assumed that he does accept them; (4) that, in the interpretation of what the Bible teaches on these subjects, private judgment has no rights which the majority are bound to respect; for it is only in the sense of the majority that the Church has ever had

a unanimous voice on any of these great subjects; (5) that whatever authority is due to the type of doctrine indicated is due, also, to a type of organization supposed to be presented in the Bible. This, taken in connection with Dr. Whedon's view that Bishops, Elders, and Deacons are "an ordained class," different in basis and authority from such offices as that of class-leaders, shows that this great Methodist is, doubtless unintentionally, on the verge of betraying his church into the hands of the Sacerdotalists. It must give to Romanists inexpressible confidence in their future triumph, when that master of logic concedes, even in a modified form, one of the fundamental principles of Romanism. He sees his church on the horns of a dilemma: it must either reject the conventional orthodoxy or accept the infallibility of the Church. He chooses the latter alternative.

Were this the place to do it, it could be shown, from a comparison of the definitions of Regeneration, the Sacraments, and the work of the Holy Spirit, given in the Wesleyan catechism, No. II., with the ordination service of the Methodist Church, that all danger of relapsing into Sacerdotalism has not yet passed away. Sacraments are there represented as means of receiving spiritual grace. Baptism is the means of regeneration. A Sacrament depends for its validity on a special qualification of the man who administers it. That qualification is received in ordination. Hence arises the distinction of an "ordained class," and, with it, the committing of Methodism to the sacerdotal side of Christianity. But, is Methodism leaving the progressive John Wesley for the reactionary Charles? Has Charles Wesley's poetry sunk deeper into the heart of Methodism than John Wesley's prose? Has the ballad-singer again triumphed over the lawgiver? Is Methodism to end by becoming one of the many paths that lead to Rome? Is it to terminate its glorious career by confirming Manning's assurance, on page 6, that "The errors of the last three hundred years are passing fast away?" The Cardinal utters a great truth when he says, on page 5, of the work already noticed, that "the infallibility of the Church" is "one of the terms of the question" between Faith and Science, dogma and free thought, and that, if we take "dogma" and "Faith" in the Romanist sense of these terms, the reconciliation of these with free thought furnishes "problems insoluble to all who reject the infallibility of the Church." — But, can Church authority

prove this view of orthodoxy correct? Let us see. There is no uniform standard of orthodoxy in Christendom. That of the Eastern Church is not that of the Western. Symbolize that of the Greek Church, and you have a Greek Lambda. Symbolize that of the Western Church, and you have a triangle. In the one, the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone: in the other, from Father and Son. Hence it is that, in the later symbolism of the catacombs at Rome, the Trinity, in the sense that prevails in the Western Church, is represented by a triangle. Both views were the best attempts of their time to express great truths which the men of that day dimly saw, but could not fully grasp or explain. Here, it is enough to know that there is no unanimity of view in Christianity on the fundamental doctrine of the Trinity, even amongst those who call themselves "orthodox." Now, take the Western Church alone: the orthodoxy of the Roman branch of it is, in foundation and matter, different from that of Protestantism. The latter is based upon the Bible: of the former, let Cardinal Manning speak. He says:* "We neither derive our religion from the Scriptures, nor does it depend upon them." Based on a wider foundation than the Bible, the Roman orthodoxy covers wider ground than that of Protestantism. Now take Protestantism apart from Rome. If Calvinism is orthodox, Arminianism is heterodox, and Maclaine was right in inserting amongst the names of heretics, not "reputed," but "real," as he distinguishes some of them, and "enemies of revelation," under which title he groups them, the following sentence, taken from page 775 of Tegg's edition of Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History," published in 1833: "Among the sects of this century we may reckon the Hernhuters, or Moravian brethren, and the followers of Whitefield, Wesley, and others of the same stamp." If immersion only is true baptism, none are orthodox, or right thinkers, but close-communion Baptists. One might go on thus till all diversities of thought were exhausted, and we came at length to the celebrated definition, "orthodoxy is my 'doxy, and heterodoxy is another man's 'doxy." Orthodoxy becomes simply the sentiment of the majority in any community. That identity of views which is represented in the formula *quod ubique*, "what is everywhere believed," finds no representative in the objective creeds, or theological standards, of any existing Church, when these creeds

* Temp. Miss. of H. G., p. 176.

are taken as wholes. The idea involved in *quod semper*, "what has always been believed," is in no better condition. Orthodoxy has never passed unchanged through two successive periods of the intellectual development of Christendom. As for *quod omnibus*, "what every one believes," it would be interesting to ask what creed, what system of orthodoxy, would combine the beliefs, or represent the common belief, of all who have enjoyed, or now enjoy, the favor of God. Unity in the personality of God was the first Christian, as it was ever the Jewish, orthodoxy, notwithstanding the plurality in the words, "Let us make man." The time when Duality in the Godhead became the prevailing opinion is definitely fixed in Church History; and this could not have been confined to the Gnostics, for the hypostatic relations of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son were not then established even in the minds of the "orthodox."

The period when the scientific statement of theology demanded and presented, as a logical result of previously assumed premises, a Trinity in unity is also a fixed era in the growth of speculative thought.

But, not only is it true that there is no uniform standard of orthodoxy in Christendom,—not only is it true that there never has been any,—but any attempt to set up the opinions of one age as a dictator to the thought of following ages has been attended by most painful consequences. It has led to a self-destructive conglomeration of opinions, like the ancient Roman adoption of the gods of every conquered race. It has led to the abnegation by intelligent men of their own intelligence. It has led to the fantastic view that the Church is one mystical person whose thinking soul is the Holy Spirit, and whose voice, to be heard and obeyed without question by all its members, is the voice of a priesthood magically invested with supernatural powers beyond any arising from its intrinsic worth. It has led to a bitter revolt of the human intelligence from all external, sacerdotal, control whatever. It has often become the fruitful source of hypocrisy in the ministry, tyranny in church courts and in private members of churches, and infidelity in the world. It is based on a total misconception of the powers and tendencies of human nature. The absence of external infallibility anywhere need be no source of alarm. Practical life does not hang on demonstration, or infallible certainty, of the truths from which it springs. Faith is sufficient. "Faith" does not

mean credulity, or that confidence, the foundation of which lies beyond the necessary convictions of the human mind, in an abnormal condition of the individual intelligence, in the influence of education, or in the weight of mere external authority,—but that confidence whose root is in the necessary instincts of humanity. The primitive tendencies to belief existing in our nature, especially on its moral and religious side, when that nature is in healthy action, ever gather essential truth from all the sources of knowledge which life everywhere presents. A comparison of statements with the facts they are taken to represent will disclose the truth or falsity of the statements; and, where the facts are beyond our reach, the truth about them will be found not to be absolutely essential to the ordinary purposes of life, though they may be so to our highest development, and may allure us onward to our own elevation. Our opinions on such points may safely be left until the explanatory facts are known.

III.

Can "Orthodoxy" rest on Christian Consciousness?

If an affirmative answer to this question means anything, it means that, wherever a consciousness of the existence of Christian piety is found in a man, there, also, is found an acceptance of the so-called orthodoxy. But this is mere assumption, and is denied by the records of Christian piety in all ages and in all lands. Was Montanus destitute of Christian consciousness? Were the "gentle Novatian" bishops whose piety rebuked their opponents?* Was the martyred Servetus? Was William Ellery Channing no Christian? Were Fletcher and John Wesley no Christians because they publicly repudiated the cruelty and contradictions of the highest expression of this orthodoxy,—the Athanasian Creed? Are the living men and women whose piety has been seen by us in the hallowed associations of personal friendship from the times of our childhood, yet who cannot bend their minds to this orthodoxy, no Christians? Then there is not in any man a test of Christianity that is worth a moment's notice; for if a godly spirit and a godly life, continued from boyhood to age, amid the changes of prosperity and sorrow, are no evidence of piety, we have nothing by which to test the inner life of any man.

* "Œcumenical Councils." Bromfield & Co., Toronto, p. 17.

Down deep in every Christian man's heart, even when, as in the majority of men, he may have no theories, or very wrong ones, is a consciousness that his being and his blessings proceed from the great Father who made the world. In that consciousness, to the instrumentality of the Son he ascribes his whole salvation, and bates not one jot of the tribute due to his master and Lord. In that consciousness, he knows that the power by which he is raised from sin to righteousness is not from himself, but from both the Father and the Son, and that power he knows is what the saints and apostles of all ages have recognized as the Holy Spirit; but when you come to define what is that Father,—what is involved in that term Son,—what is that Holy Ghost,—he may accept the scholastic definitions you propose, if your support of them appears to him sufficient; and, if it does not appear sufficient, he will discard them, and his Christianity will not be impaired thereby. This view of orthodoxy cannot be based on Christian consciousness, without ignoring facts in Christian biography that are patent to all mankind.

IV.

Can "Orthodoxy" rest on the Bible?

This is not the place to examine the whole Bible for the purpose of ascertaining whether the particular passages supposed to uphold the scholastic views now called orthodoxy really do so or not; but a few thoughts on the subject are necessary to the argument. It must not be forgotten that the translation of the Bible now used by us was made by men who regarded no view but that of this "orthodoxy," at least as modified by the results of the Lutheran Reformation, as the correct one. The translation, therefore, bears the impress of the preconceptions of the men who made it. Yet, even in this translation, now that no well-read man maintains the genuineness of 1 John v., 7, 8, not one passage distinctly maintains this so-called orthodoxy. Not one passage of those which seem to maintain it is not capable of bearing a meaning totally different from it, without doing any violence to the meaning of the words or to the laws of grammatical construction. Many passages of the New Testament, plainer in their utterances than those on which this scholastic orthodoxy is sought to be built, crowd upon the mind, as soon as it is freed from that bondage to past traditions by which we put a meaning into

the Bible that is really not there, and flatly contradict the whole scheme. Men in all ages of Christianity, since written books by Christian authors took the place of the "oral gospel" from which much of the written gospels was obtained, have protested against the meaning put upon the Bible by those who assumed the title of "orthodox." The learning of these men is acknowledged even by such a body as the Bible Revision Committee; and the value of their researches is being felt by all who take the pains to make themselves acquainted with them. The time has gone by when the charge of invincible ignorance, or a desire to escape from moral and religious obligations, may, without a crime, be laid against these abused men. They are as learned as those who, in their supercilious spiritual pride, deny them a place in Christianity; often, in their lonely exclusion from the fellowship of men whose zeal they admire, but whose narrowness they regret, they are more saintly than their accusers; in the uprightness of their lives, and in their quiet, unobtrusive devotion to men and to their Master, they rebuke the supineness of those who shudder with holy horror at the sound of their name. And these men love their Bibles. But they see not in them the dogmas of Anselm, Aquinas, Origen, Augustine, and the Synods and Councils of either the early or the later times of Christianity. This does not prove that the so-called orthodoxy is wrong; but the fact that equally good and learned men form views so different of the teachings of the same book proves that some other basis must be found for confidence in the so-called orthodoxy, than simply the Scriptures. Before investigating the meaning of the Bible in its bearing on this point, a deeper question must be answered; for the interpretation of the Bible depends upon our knowledge of its origin, the idiosyncrasies of the writers, the influence on them of the current thought of their day, and the relation of these writers to God on one hand, and to mankind in general on the other.

1. What is the relation of the Bible to the human intelligence? This question is being forced upon us. Science appeals to observation, and thus invests the human mind with immense importance and responsibility. Modern education impels to the use of this intelligence. The child is no longer taught to work arithmetical problems by unreasoning compliance with rules. The tendency is, indeed, to place so much importance upon the word "why" that our smaller "Arithmetics" are almost too abstruse even for

adults. Where the intellect is incapable of solving any problem, science now forbids dogmatism at all. Roscoe and Cooke warn students of Chemistry against dogmatizing even on the atomic theory. This elevation of the mental faculties demands an answer to the question,—how does the Bible bear on this thought? The importance of the matter is increased by the fact that, when the "Bible Revision Committee" have finished their labors, the people will have what will, practically, be two Bibles. These will not agree: who will decide between the conflicting claims? Authority cannot; for both versions will have had authority in their favor. The masses cannot judge of MSS., or grammatical intricacies in dead languages. Common sense, or Reason, will assert itself. We may as well prepare for this at once. The Scriptures must assume one of two attitudes: they must be regarded as a *fountain*, or as a *dictator*. If the former view of them prevail, then will they lie open to the use of all, even while critical analysis unfolds their healthful, or their deleterious qualities, if any deleterious qualities should be discovered. Their value will be hidden by no blindness of antecedent antagonism; but the keener the investigation, the better will the old Bible appear. If the latter position be assigned to the Scriptures, then, so perilous is it to trust one's eternity to anything beyond one's own judgment, that the claim to infallible dictatorship and the right to unquestioning submission will subject the Bible, immediately, to all the disadvantages of self-defence against unfriendly scrutiny. Then, even the good of the Book will be endangered amid the search for weakness and defect. Unfortunately, this is the position the majority of its friends are ever claiming for it; and the evidence of history seems useless to teach them the consequences of their misguided zeal. At the time of the Reformation, it seemed to be accepted as an axiom that infallibility must be found somewhere; and the Pope and Councils being rejected, in no long time the Bible was installed into their vacated office. Richard Watson, too, the greatest systematic theologian Methodism has yet produced, even when granting, as he does in a Note to a chapter in his "Institutes," that "Reason is the foundation of all certitude," does for Reason exactly what Cardinal Manning does,—employs it to overthrow its own authority. The latter makes the Church the dictator; the former, the Bible.

The prevalence of the view that the Scriptures must be

accepted as a dictator to the intelligence has largely arisen from the unquestioning use of that ambiguous source of so many fallacies—the expression, the "Word of God," as applied to the Bible. It has been already noticed that this use of the expression has no authority in the Scriptures themselves, and could have none; for, before it could be so used, the book must have been made distinct from other books, and quite complete: the term could be applied to the Bible only after it was all written. On this subject, Hagenbach* says of *Töllner*, who died in 1774: "He shows, from the language of Scripture itself, that, by the *Word of God*, we are not to understand the Sacred Scriptures." If, by the "Word of God," we mean the *only* source of Revelation, *Töllner* is decidedly Wesleyan; for Wesley extends revelation beyond the Scriptures.

(1) *What is "Bible," and what is not?* The Old Testament existed in two forms, the Hebrew and the Greek translation of it known as the LXX. The latter was the form most used and quoted by the New Testament writers. It was their "Bible." But, in this "Bible," the books of Esdras, now, and since the Geneva Bible of 1560, found in the Apocrypha, existed as III. & IV. Ezra, and Nehemiah stood as I. & II. Esdras. Hagenbach† assures us that "other church writers cite even the fourth Book of Ezra, and Origen defends the tale about Susanna, as well as the books of Tobias and Judith." The New Testament was not accepted in its present form until after centuries elapsed. The oldest MS. now known contains the "Epistle of Barnabas" and part of the "Shepherd of Hermas":‡ that MS. is appealed to as a high authority on some points; but, unless reasons from sources beyond the MS. itself had been found for the rejection of these "uncanonical" books, their presence in the Tischendorf manuscript would elevate them to a position equal to the other portions. The Apocalypse was not admitted to the Bible till the 6th century by the Greek Church; and even the Latin Church remained for several centuries before it accepted the N. T. canon as it now stands: for centuries, the majority said certain books were not the "Word of God;" afterward, the majority said they were. Thus it will be seen that whether any book, or what book, was to be considered the "Word of God" rested on the judgment of certain men, or on the arguments which convinced them. To accept the *mere*

* Vol. ii., p. 466. † Vol. i., p. 84.
‡ "When were our Gospels Written?" Tischendorf, p. 29.

authority of these persons is practically to accept their infallibility. To accept the *arguments* of these persons is to acknowledge the ability of *our* judgment to test arguments as accurately as themselves. In either case, we abandon the ultimate *dictatorship* of the Bible; for, in one, we trust to the judgment of other men, and, in the other, to our own. The whole question is solved by Wesley. He accepted whatever facts came from any source, as decisive of the problems to which they were related. Truth, then, on his principle, is the "Word of God," no matter whence derived; and the Bible, as the highest known expression of that Truth, gives a final decision on the facts it reveals. His principle was:—*Thy* word is TRUTH."

(2) What is inspiration? Does it imply infallible dictatorship? Inspiration must be sought in the form, the thought, or the purpose, of the Scriptures. Is it in the *form?* To say this is to state that Inspiration is the supernatural communication of the words and the order of language employed. Such an inspiration would be confined to the original copies, unless translators also should be inspired; and, where such copies did not present self-evident proofs of such infallibility, the compilers would need equal guidance in collecting them. Some have gone so far as to claim this for the Septuagint.

Such an infallibility could not be permanent, even if the originals were preserved. Words ever change their meaning: and, in time, the sense of the best original would become obscure amid the variety of meanings borne by the words employed. Its infallibility would, then, be practically lost. Besides, we have not the originals, either of the Old Testament or the New. Of many Old Testament books, Canon Farrar says: "They have, in fact, been edited with explanatory glosses and other additions and interpolations by later writers, and especially, if we may accept the very probable Jewish tradition, by Ezra and members of the Great Synagogue."* No MSS. of the New Testament are found to date their origin earlier than the fourth century. Further, Christ spoke Aramaic; and we have no assurance that, if we had the original Greek writings, they would infallibly give Christ's words.

Such an infallibility would either be useless or would lead to ridiculous consequences. There are passages, the sense of which is so uncertain that, even if some hidden infallibility

* *Bible Educator*, Vol. i., Art.—"The Inspiration of Holy Scripture," p. 260.

lies in them, that infallibility is useless. One such passage is Hebrews IX., 16, 17. For one meaning of it, are Pierce, Doddridge, Michaelis, Macknight, Parkhurst, Scholefield, Henderson, Barnes, Tait, and, perhaps, Green. For another, are Calvin, Erasmus, Wolfe, Newcombe, Alberti, Bengel, Schleusner, Rosenmüller, Stuart, Robinson, Winer, and Bloomfield. The passage is an important one; but of what value would be an infallibility which leaves its meaning uncertain? Scholarship appears incapable of solving the grammatical and other difficulties of the passage, or proving the sense demanded by the context.

Some consequences of this infallibility theory reduce the question of inspiration to an absurdity. Hebrews III., 16, means one of two distinctly opposite things according as a Greek word has an acute accent or a grave, and has it on the first syllable or the second, thus extending infallible dictation of the form even to the inclination or position of a little stroke. In the uncial manuscripts, no accents occur, and in the cursives, they are not always found; hence, infallible certainty of the meaning of this verse, and similar passages, is not attainable, unless we suppose a divine and infallible guidance of those who added the accents. Probability, based on various considerations, is all that we can have, and is quite sufficient for practical purposes. A comparison of Griesbach, Westcott, and Bagster's "Critical English New Testament," on 1 Tim. III., 16, will show that, in addition to the presence or absence of the letter *sigma*, the true reading depends upon the existence or the non-existence of a little line in the centre of a Greek letter, making it an Omicron or a Theta. As regards the bearing of this theory on the Old Testament, the following passage from the younger Buxtorf will, to many, be a curiosity. *Ordo literarum Hebraicarum nititur auctoritate Divina; nam in non-nullis Capitibus Veteris T. versiculi a literis Alphabeti hoc ordine incipiunt: ex. gr. Caput primum Threnorum continet 22 versus, quorum singuli a literis Alphabeti incipiunt.* "The order of the Hebrew letters rests upon divine authority; for, in some chapters of the Old Testament, the verses begin with the letters of the Alphabet in that order: e.g., the first chapter of Lamentations contains twenty-two verses, all of which, in their order, begin with the letters of the Alphabet."*

This infallibility theory is contradicted by facts. How-

**Johannis Buxtorfii Epitome Grammaticæ Hebrææ: Lugduni Batavorum,* 1776, p. 5.

ever ungracious the task may be, the assumptions of false theories must be met by facts; and it is remarkable how examination of the Bible overturns the mischievous fables about the Bible which so many insist upon identifying with the Truth. *The Scriptures contain incorrect statements.* The importance of the passages referred to as proof of this proposition depends on their relation to the question at issue, and that alone. It will not do to say, "no important doctrine is at stake in them." The question is,—is the *form* of the Bible free from error? If any contradiction occurs, the question is answered, no matter whether any other question remains unaffected or not. Very few of the many facts which have been elicited by such men as Neander, Burnet, Tholuck, Hinds, Whately, and Farrar, can be here presented; yet some must be given. Dean Prideaux, in his "Old and New Testament Connected,"* says: "It is most likely that the two books "of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, as well as "Malachi, were afterward added in the time of Simon the "Just, and that it was not till then that the Jewish canon "of the Holy Scriptures was fully completed. And, indeed, "these last books seem very much to want the exactness "and skill of Ezra in their publication, *they falling far "short of the correctness which is in the other parts of the "Hebrew Scriptures.*" By a comparison of 2 Chronicles XXI., 17, 20, XXII., 1, 2, and 2 Kings VIII., 26, it will be found that Jehoram died at the age of 40 years. By one account, Ahaziah, or Azariah, or Jehoahaz, as he is variously called, succeeds his father at the age of 22 years; and by the other, at 42 years. The first account leaves the father 18 years of age at his son's birth: the second makes the father unborn for two years after his son's accession. This son, too, is the youngest; for, prior to his own birth, Jehoram had not only a plurality of sons, but of wives.—Dr. Geo. Smith, a Methodist writer, in his "Sacred Annals," on the authority of Dr. Adam Clarke, accuses the Jews of our Lord's day of so tampering with the Hebrew Biblical chronology that a difference of 1386 years is now found between the Hebrew and the LXX, though it did not exist prior to 280 B.C. Infallibility in *our present* version, then, is hopelessly gone. The four Gospels profess to give the language of the inscription on the cross: no two agree; therefore some or all must be destitute of infallibility in the actual form of the words.—Mark XV, 25, says

* Vol. i., pp. 272-3.

Christ was crucified at nine in the morning: John, XIX, 15, says he was still before Pilate at noon. *The Scriptures contain inaccurate quotations.* Mill, quoted by Farrar,* says that the Apostles quote the LXX, even where, were they to rely upon the Hebrew, not only would the force of the Apostolic argument perish, but there would be found no place for any argument. Mill's words are: *si reponerentur Hebræa non modo periret vis argumentationis Apostolicæ, sed ne ullus quidem foret argumentationi locus.* The quotations in the New Testament from the Old Testament are numbered to the amount of 275. Of these, the New Testament, the Hebrew, and the LXX, agree in only 53 instances. In 76, the New Testament, by differing from the LXX, differs more widely from the Hebrew. In 99 cases, there is no correspondence between any two of the three. Should it be said that, by virtue of the Apostolic use of the LXX, an infallible authority is imparted to their quotations from that translation, the above remarks will show that this would lead to different and conflicting infallibilities. *The Scriptures contain, even in important passages, spurious glosses and interpolations.* "The Critical English New Testament" gives, amongst many others, Mark XVI., 9-20; John V., 3-4, and Canon Farrar presents Matt. VI., 13; Acts VIII., 37; and 1 John, V., 7. The last named writer says: "Is not this sufficient to show that "what was really important was the Divine message and "revelation, not the form in which it was delivered—the "sacred treasure, not the vessel in which it was conveyed?"

Is inspiration to be found in the *thought* of the Bible? To answer in the affirmative is to assert that the knowledge contained in the Bible was given by supernatural inspiration. But this is to confound inspiration and revelation. That Truth, little known, or entirely unknown, elsewhere, was possessed by the Jews is a mere truism. That new thoughts of God, man, and the mutual relations of God and man were given to the world in and by Jesus Christ is but another truism. That the Bible is the casket in which these thoughts are contained is only another. Did *God* reveal, or unveil, these thoughts to the men who uttered them? Assuredly! Then the Bible contains a revelation from God. It contains his word, — Truth. It does not contain all his Truth. It is not the only source from which Truth is gained. But it is the written record of thoughts which God has been unfolding more and more from the

* *Bible Educator*, Vol. i., p. 262.

earliest times of human history until, in Christ, the living embodiment, or incarnation, of his Thought, the Word became revealed in fullness, and until that Word lived again in the deeds and writings of his holy apostles and evangelists. But this communication of thoughts is not, properly speaking, inspiration. The communication of knowledge, whether by bringing it down to the ordinary intelligence, or by raising the intelligence to an extraordinary power of grasping it, is, properly, revelation. Inspiration deals with the writing, recording, and transmission, of knowledge received. Besides this confusion of things that differ, such a view of inspiration as the one questioned contradicts the Bible itself. Much of the knowledge conveyed to us by the Bible was originally given supernaturally, but in the sense in which "the "deepest facts of our spiritual experience are supernatural, "and only miraculous as any communications must be "miraculous whereby the finite is enabled to comprehend "the teaching and will of the Infinite."* But much of the information came to the Scriptural writers by no such means. The late Dr. Freshman, who, as a Jewish rabbi, surely knew something of his own Bible, says, in his little work on the Pentateuch, that the book of Genesis was compiled from eleven original documents. The "Chronicles" record ten documents as authorities for their statements.† The genealogy of Christ is based on legal documents. Luke writes from observation as an eye-witness, and from testimony of other eye-witnesses. The Bible presents History, Physical Nature, the Human mind, and Language, as sources of Revelation. *Inspiration*, consequently, must not be sought in the *matter* of the Bible. It must, then, be found in the *purpose*. It will then be a divine impulse to write. This conclusion the writer is glad to find confirmed even by Manning, on page 158 of the work so frequently quoted. It does not fully answer his purposes; and he adds to it, on page 161, matter quite distinct from the question of inspiration, and somewhat contrary to his own sentiments expressed on page 159. The following thoughts, however, are valuable: "First, "then, comes the word *Inspiration*, which is often con-"founded with *Revelation*. Inspiration, in its *first inten-"tion*, signifies the action of the Divine Spirit upon the "human, that is, upon the intelligence and upon the will. "It is an intelligent and vital action of God upon the

* *Bible Educator*, i., p. 336. † *Bible Educator*, i, p. 260.

"soul of man; and 'inspired' is to be predicated, not "of books or truths, but of living agents. In its *second* "*intention*, it signifies the action of the Spirit of God upon "the intelligence and will of man, whereby any one is "impelled and enabled to act, or to speak, or to write, "in some special way designed by the Spirit of God. In "its still more *special* and *technical intention*, it signifies an "action of the Spirit upon men, impelling them to write "what God reveals, suggests, or wills that they should "write. But inspiration does not necessarily signify reve-"lation, or suggestion of the matter to be written." This accords with the Bible itself, which represents knowledge as coming from various sources, but the impulse and purpose to write as coming from God. Compare Habakkuk II., 2; Revela. I., 11-19; Rom. XV., 4; Luke I., 3, &c. But here is no ground for a belief in infallible dictatorship.

We are reduced to the conviction that the Bible is not to be a dictator, the infallibility of whose voice is to be assumed in every discussion, but a source of truth given by godly men from a godly purpose inspired in them by that providence who guides all minds that come within the circle of His spiritual laws; for such infallibility would be useless unless we were infallibly certain of the correct meaning of every passage. That a divine power inspired this purpose, and revealed the thoughts, may be gathered from the following considerations. Where the teachings of the Bible are clearly demonstrated, no scrutiny has found error in its leading doctrines. Its moral and spiritual thoughts accord with the convictions of the wisest and best minds. It accords with history and science, where they and it are best understood. It gives thoughts higher than those derived from any other source. There is in it a unity of progressive spiritual plan and purpose. Its fruits are everywhere beneficial. It anticipates the mightiest changes in the political and ecclesiastical world. Its promises are the only satisfactory assurances of the reality of those things our deepest instincts crave. —If these things speak not of the presence of a divine element, the mind of man is incapable of tracing the Deity anywhere.

2. What are the teachings of this Book on the dogmas of the old ecclesiasticism? This is a vast question. To answer it satisfactorily demands far more learning and far more time than the writer can boast of; and, if he had all the requisites, the answering of the question would simply be the substitution of one system of dogmatics for another.

It only remains to ask whether this so-called orthodox presentation of the ultimate facts of Christianity is borne out by the Bible. Of the Athanasian creed, two views may be taken, according as some of its terms are used in their strictly grammatical sense, or in a conventional sense. Take "substance" as equivalent to "hypostasis," and "person" as equal to "a mask, or assumed character;" and one hypothesis of the Trinity arises. There is then but one hypostasis in God; and the three persons are but manifestations of that God. There is then no real, but only an apparent, Trinity in Unity.

Take, however, "substance" in the conventional sense of "essence," and "person" as "hypostasis," or distinct consciousness and will; and you have three Gods. Consciousness and will are marks of individuality; and no identity of disposition or action in the three wills can prevent their distinctness. Three individuals must be three Gods; and no subsequent denial of this, in words, can be a denial in fact. To assert it first, and, afterward, deny it, is to remove the question from the court of common-sense, and to appeal simply to external authority. Hence, the creed says *tres Deos aut Dominos dicere catholicâ religione prohibemur*, — "we are forbidden by the "(Roman) Catholic Religion to say that there are three "Gods or Lords."

By our interpretation of this highest expression of "orthodoxy," then, we are shut up to one of these two conclusions. We may adopt a view of the Trinity to which even some Socinians would not object, or we may form a theory which is essentially tri-theistic. The majority of "orthodox" people do the latter. But here the question arises,—do the Scriptures teach either of these hypotheses?

The term hypostasis occurs five times in the Greek Testament, 2 Cor. IX., 4; XI, 17; Heb., I., 3; III., 14; XI., 1. Only in Hebrews I., 3, has it any relation to the nature of God, being used in the remaining passages in the sense of "firm conviction," or "confidence." In that passage, Beza translates it by the word *personæ*. Luther renders it by *Wesens*, which the dictionaries define as *being, substance, nature, disposition, behavior, conduct*. Diodati uses for it *sossistenza*, subsistence, and not *sostanza*, substance. Craik, the author of Bagster's "Amended "Translation of the Epistle to the Hebrews" says, on this verse: "There is no authority for ὑπόστασις "hypostasis,"

" being used in the sense of 'person' until centuries after " the time when the epistle was written."

However, then, we may translate this word, so far as Scripture testimony goes, there is but one hypostasis in God; and all that mass of speculative confusion which has been imposed upon the Church for so many centuries is utterly without Scriptural foundation.

An examination of the "proof-texts" of the New Testament would be out of place here; but it may safely be asserted that, as the speculations of the "fathers," who by these speculations originated this "orthodoxy," arose long after the New Testament was written,—as the New Testament writers knew nothing of those subsequent speculations, — and as some features of this "orthodoxy" confessedly arose, by pure logical necessity, from premises not certainly correct, and not derived from the New Testament Scriptures,—this particular system of explaining the ultimate facts of Scriptural teaching and Christian consciousness cannot be necessary to the sense of the New Testament. A critical examination of the strongest texts usually adduced in its favor, to whatever other hypotheses they may give rise, will be found rather to destroy than to help the one now under consideration. The plea that the matter is a "mystery," or an unexplained or unexplainable fact, removes all propriety of dogmatizing on one side any more than on the other; so that we cannot but confess the wisdom of Wesley, who desired to enforce no explanation or mystery, but rather to leave the formation of hypotheses to the gradual development of the intelligence likely to arise from a critical analysis and synthesis of facts. The passages most appealed to in support of the ecclesiastical "orthodoxy" are those which relate to the pre-existence of Christ, and his relations to Creation and the Deity. All these, however, centre in the one term, the Logos, or "Word." That both this Logos and He who is the embodiment of it are called God is certain. That Creation is represented as having been made in and through (ἐν and διά) Christ is also certain. But, if we go beyond these statements, and ask in what sense we are to understand them, four answers, at least, have been given, presenting four hypotheses,—the Ideal, the Hypostatic, the Emanation, and the Personal. The ideal theory represents the Logos as the divine Conception, Thought, or Ideal, God's character, Himself in ideal form, chosen and purposed from eternity, to be

embodied in Jesus of Nazareth, for the perfect exhibition of His will. This is the theory dimly shadowed forth by Henoch and Philo. The hypostatic theory represents the Logos as a "person," in the modern popular sense of one having a distinct consciousness and will, and is the so-called "orthodox," or "catholic," hypothesis. The emanation theory represents the Logos as a material, or semi-material, product of the divine substance, and is the hypothesis once adopted by the Gnostics. The personal theory,—following the strictly etymological sense of the word "person," *persona*, a mask, or assumed character, like the characters represented on a theatrical stage,—presents the one God under different phases, according to the work he does, and makes the Logos one of several aspects under which the Deity is revealed. To ascertain which of these theories, if any, is the correct one demands the study of history, science, and language. We must know whether the study of Creation reveals any relation to Christ in the growing geologic ages, or "time-worlds." We must know what were the views on the Logos and Creation prevalent in the times of the Scripture writers, and whether they used these words in the sense then assigned to them. We must know the different senses of which such words are capable, and ascertain which has the weight of evidence in its favor. Tested by this knowledge, some of the theories mentioned have already been overthrown. Is any one of them satisfactory? Whether it is or not, does the Bible teach it? In particular, does it teach the hypostatic theory of the Logos? It is enough for the purposes of this essay to know that John Wesley denies that the Bible presents any such theory or explanation, and that he insists on nothing but the simple facts, leaving all speculative explanations to the individual judgment and to time.

That the *Old Testament* cannot serve as a certain proof of this conventional orthodoxy may be seen from the following considerations: Westcott, page 163, assures us of "the Hebrew faith in the absolute unity of God." The "Imperial Bible Dictionary"* says: "The Jews gener-"ally did not expect Messiah to be more than man." On page 111, Westcott tells us that, prior to the flood, Messiah was not regarded even as a man, but that Jewish hope centred in "a race, a nation, a tribe." "Up to this point," he says, "no personal trait of a Redeemer was given."

* Vol. II., p. 575, Art. *Peter*.

"The doubtful term *Shiloh*,* cannot be urged against "this view." On page 121, he assures us that the book of Henoch, quoted by Jude as an authority, and written about 107 B. C., proclaims Messiah as only a man, *and his pre-existence as being in the divine choice and purpose.* Thus, it will be seen that Scriptural facts, whether in the Old Testament or the New, when elicited by a thorough investigation, in the light of the best authorities, may admit, without prevarication or dishonesty, of more than one explanation, and do not necessarily involve those which the common view of "orthodoxy" demands. One quotation more must be given. It is the second of the thirteen Jewish "Articles of Faith." — "I believe with a perfect "faith that the Creator,—blessed be his name,— is only "ONE, in unity to which there is no resemblance, and that "He alone hath been, is, and will be, our God." In view of this, some other explanation of the plural *Elohim*, "Let *us* make," &c., and "the angel Jehovah," than the one demanded by "orthodoxy" must be regarded as, at least, possible. What it is, and what is really meant, in the Scriptures, by the Holy Spirit, may be elicited from a careful examination of historical facts, and by the use of a concordance.

§ 5.

Wesley's Relation to "Orthodoxy."

No Church can at once free itself from the traditions of the past. When Luther separated from the Pope, he carried with him much of the thought, and no little of the spirit, of the abandoned system. When the Church of England cast off the trammels of Popery, it did not and could not suddenly see how fully Popery had left its impress upon its popular opinion. Hence, in many respects, the language of Manning, page 140, describes its early condition. "The traditional teaching of the Catholic theology, with its various opinions, were therefore passively retained." The theology of the so-called "fathers" of the early Christian Church largely moulded that of the Church of England. When Wesley began to move away from the traditions of his Church, he little knew whither his steps tended; and the very Protestant and Arminian principles which he adopted drove him, even against the violent resistence of his intense conservatism, to points from which he had before recoiled.

* Gen. XLIX., 10.

So intense was this conservatism that, on one occasion, it completely overpowered his candor, and drove him to the celebrated recipe for the cure of doubts,—an absolute refusal to think. This recipe was employed by him, to prevent what threatened to be the consequences of reading Watts on "The Glorified Humanity of Christ." "What have you or I," said he to Benson, "to do with that 'difficulty'? I dare not, will not, reason about it for a moment."—"I would not have read it (Dr. Watt's ingenious treatise) through for five hundred pounds." * For once, the fearless man of candor, the consistent logician, and the man who had proclaimed that the fundamental principles of his system should undergo the most rigorous examination, and be abandoned if found untenable, or antagonistic to the wider interests of Christianity, quailed before the merely possible consequences of continued investigation!

Yet his principles involve further progress than Wesley ever made, or an abandonment of the whole ground he conquered.

1. *Wesley's later view of Justifying Faith, Justification, and Human Merit, renders the scholastic hypotheses of "orthodoxy" unnecessary.* This view, arising from the case of Cornelius, presents the object of saving faith as God and spiritual things, and faith as such a confidence in these as leads to a righteous life. Yet the Notes on Cornelius state that the acceptability of such a life is "through Christ." The official explanation of Justification given in the "Bound Minutes" of 1770 presents that, not as the act of a moment, but as a sentiment of approval varying directly as the goodness of the life approved, and based upon the inherent goodness of that life. Can these thoughts be harmonized? In what does the work of Christ through which our goodness is acceptable consist? In what sense is our goodness acceptable for its own sake, and is yet acceptable through him? If saving faith has for its object God and spiritual things, and if this object is capable of being presented in various degrees of completeness by the different sources of revelation open to all minds, from the Materialist up to the Christian, then the work of Christ is the perfect manifestation of God's character and, consequently, his will, thus unfolding the true standard of moral and spiritual life. The acceptable life is, then, one that is conformed to this manifestation made by Christ; and its acceptability is graduated according to its

* *Letter to Joseph Benson*, written September 17th, 1788.

conformity to him. The merit or value of that life, then, while inherent in the life itself, is tested by the ideal fully given only in Christ; thus, while our goodness is approved *secundum merita operum*, the merits themselves arise from the conformity of the life to the great standard by which all human goodness is tested. Life becomes more or less acceptable to God according to the Christ-like spirit which is in it. But this great standard of perfect goodness was set up in the world only at the cost of agony and death; and, under the circumstances, it could not have been otherwise. Christ, then, becomes the central object of human thought; and his blood-shedding becomes the centre of attraction in his whole life. In one and the same life, he maintains the authority of divine righteousness, provides an unvarying standard by which all are tried, thus becoming the Judge of all, and so effectually touches the deepest seat of human affection by his sacrifice of himself for human good that he arouses in us, not merely admiration for the character of God revealed in him, but a love so intense that racks and flames, misunderstandings and misrepresentations, tortures physical and tortures mental, cannot "separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Christ thus becomes our Teacher, our Judge, and our Saviour,—"the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

But there is another aspect to this matter which must not be forgotten. The antagonism of this later view of Wesley's with his earlier views extends deeper and wider than the mere theological presentation of the Truth. It goes down to the underlying philosophical principles, and out to the ecclesiastical, educational, scientific, social, and political consequences of theology. Here, it is necessary only to observe the underlying philosophy. Problems in theology appear first in philosophy; and the correctness of the former will be tested, for the most part, by the soundness of the latter.

The relation of philosophy to theology is put with such peculiarly French clearness by Demogeot, in his "Histoire de la Littérature Française," that a few quotations from that writer seem to be appropriate here. Speaking of "Roscelin de Compiègne," Demogeot says: "Il "n'existe à ses yeux que des êtres individuels, comme "tel homme, tel animal. Les classes qui les contiennent, "les genres, les espèces, comme l'humanité, la création, "n'ont aucune existence réelle; ce sont des mots, des "*noms:* Roscelin est *nominaliste.* De cette doctrine à

" la négation du mystère de la Trinité, il n'y a qu'un pas, " et Roscelin le franchit ; il devint trithéiste, et mourut " fugitif, frappé des anathèmes de l'Eglise. L'adversaire " de Roscelin, c'est saint Anselme, dont nous avons déjà " parlé. Pour lui, les *idées*, comme parle Platon, ou les " *universaux*, comme on disait alors, ont une existence " indépendante des individus où ils se manifestent. — Il " voit partout des *réalités*, il est *réaliste*. — Roscelin avait " poussé les conséquences de sa doctrine contre le dogme " catholique ; Anselme protége le dogme des conséquences " de la sienne : il écrit contre Roscelin le *Traité de la* " *Trinité*. Abélard fut *conceptualiste*. — Abélard comme " Roscelin, son maître, s'écarta du dogme catholique, et jeta " bientôt l'alarme dans le camp sévère de l'orthodoxie." *

Here, we see how theology varies with philosophy, how Nominalism led to tri-theism, how Realism was adopted to uphold the "Catholic," or Romish, view of the Trinity, and how, when the faults of Realism were pointed out, and Conceptualism was substituted for it, Abélard threw consternation into the camp of Romish "orthodoxy," doubtless by that view of the Atonement which he presented, and of which Bushnell's so greatly reminds us, and the logical effects of that view on "orthodoxy" in general.

Now, no one can compare the early and later views of Wesley without realizing that a change, toward the close of his life, was going on in the philosophical standpoint from which his theology was formed. Great political changes were in progress in the world. The principles on which political authority was based were being questioned. The "divine right of kings" was being shattered by the advancing democracy of America ; and, in the relation of Wesley to the New World, as well as the Old, it was impossible for his mind to be unaffected by the mental revolutions going on around him, or to resist entirely the general tendencies to progress. Beneath the early and later views of the founder of Methodism may be found two distinct conceptions of *law*. Law viewed from the standpoint of political government, and that monarchical, moulds his early theology, even while the germs of his later opinions are springing up in his mind. Hence arose the view of God's "right" to prescribe the terms of pardon, as an absolute sovereign of an unlimited monarchy. Hence Wesley's view of justice as "vindictive," and its office as that of punishing offences. Hence his view of govern-

* Pp. 175–178.

mental "expedients," to reconcile justice and mercy, and his arbitrary introduction of the word "yet" into a passage of Scripture relating to God as "just and the justifier," when the original presents no antagonism between these two attributes.

Law, as Mr. Wesley's age advanced, seems, more than before, to have assumed, in his view, the scientific aspect rather than the forensic or judicial. The personality of the Divine Spirit, or the distinctness of his conscious existence, in relation to the human spirit, continued to give form to Wesley's conceptions of government; but law ceases to be regarded as an arbitrary enactment, and becomes an inherent tendency to act in fixed ways. Stevens says:* "In his admirable sermon on the Properties of the Law, "Wesley has attempted to define the basis of all theology. "The moral system of the universe—the 'moral law'—is "a unit. It is not an arbitrary enactment by the Supreme "Ruler, but grows out of his own essential nature." The forensic and judicial view is based upon the scientific; and God's government is conducted upon principles which have their foundation in the necessary tendencies of his own nature and of creation. The arbitrary disappears. However and whenever God's relations to Creation began, these relations exist; and He is, therefore, absolute, not in the sense of being unlimited in power, but simply independent in existence,—and infinite, only in the sense of being perfect in character. The bearings of this view on other points in theology are apparent. Justice then appears to be the inexorable maintenance of the laws of nature, meaning by "nature" all that is,—the upholding of the conditions necessary to the accomplishment of any given end. The conditions of a possible reconciliation of all men to God were the manifestation of God's love and God's righteousness,—love, to awaken human love,—righteousness, in the spirit of the Saviour's life, preserved "even unto death," to present the uniform and obligatory standard by which all men must be tried, and to give direction to the awakened desire to please the loving author of all good. The "Atonement," or means of reconciliation, then, becomes this double manifestation of love and justice, in the one "human righteousness" of Jesus. Every man then becomes accepted, so far as he is Christlike, and because he is Christlike, for the sake of Christ,—that is, because he is Godlike,—that is, because he is right. By

* *Hist.*, p. 689.

this view only can we understand those passages in Wesley's writings which present repentance as a change from death to life, which present the first movement of a soul toward God as spiritual and accepted life, and which present "conversion," as commonly understood, as only one of many successive and marked steps in the development of a perfect Christian piety. By this view only can we understand how goodness is acceptable for its own sake, and yet, also, for the sake of Christ. By this view only can we understand how those who, in Wesley's writings, are called "servants" of God are accepted on one common principle with those whom he calls "sons"; and by this alone can we understand how such a man as Mr. Law, who denied "Justification by Faith," is, in one passage, called a "servant," and in another a "child," of God.

By this aspect of "law," we may form correct ideas of what is the penalty of sin. It ceases to be pain arbitrarily inflicted, and as arbitrarily continued or removed; but it is viewed as a natural and necessary consequence of wrong doing, proportioned to the kind and degree of the wrong, and continuous as the duration of that wrong. Hence, too, may we arrive at a correct idea of forgiveness. It is no longer an arbitrary removal of penalty; for that cannot be removed. He who violates physical law, by smoking to the injury of his nervous system, by irregularity and excess in food or drink, by excess or deficiency in physical exercise, cannot, by orthodox belief or pious devotions or contributions to "the Superannuated Fund," avoid the consequent irritability, depression, rheumatism, paralysis, or insanity, any more than grasshoppers can be removed by sprinkling "holy water" on the fields to the tinkling music of a little bell, or small-pox be cured by processions of praying women led by a priest with a big cross in his hands. Turkish baths, tooth-brushes, and dumb-bells, will never remove the low spiritual conceptions, or the base sensuality, of him who never prays. The learning and saintliness of Thomas Walsh will never save him from the shortened life, the curtailed usefulness, and the perpetual lesson of folly, brought about by his unnatural asceticism. Throughout eternity, the impure in heart can never see God; and the youth wasted in sin can never, to all eternity, by subsequent goodness, obtain the position which might have been gained had the whole life been spent in obedience to the laws of God.

Pardon is simply the re-introduction of the offender

within the circle of God's beneficent laws, physical, moral, or spiritual; and it is given whenever the offender returns to his allegiance. In spiritual things, Christ Jesus is the only perfect expression of God's highest law of Love; and he who returns to Jesus, to learn his spirit, and manifest it, instantly partakes of that spiritual pardon which is free for all. The conviction of God's personality will remove from this view all appearance of cold necessity, and will touch the heart that longs for personal care and sympathy with the assurance of a divine tenderness as minute in its details as it is grand in its unlimited comprehension. If the modern term "Evangelical" is not to be continued as a more or less Calvinistic party "Shibboleth," or to sink into a mere cant word with no determinate meaning, its force must be found in this recognition of personal contact between the human mind and the Divine Spirit, according to the general laws of spiritual influence. By this, Christianity will be saved at once from necessitarianism and from that humanitarianism which traces mental and moral changes no farther than the inherent tendencies of humanity as affected by the associations of its merely mundane circumstances. How will such a view alter clerical dealings with so-called "penitents"! No longer will "seekers" of salvation be urged to unreasoning credulity in accepting the "authoritative assurance" of pardon from priestly lips; and no longer will the perplexed spirit be sent away, to mourn to disgust over its inability to "find peace" by attempting to solve metaphysical and theological problems. But, recognizing Jesus as the highest expression of God's law of spiritual life, and realizing that "coming to Jesus" means learning of him, catching the inspiration of his spirit, and being, like him, humble, trustful in those divine influences by which alone good is begotten in us, and in divine protection, and being obedient to divine laws, the "assurance" of pardon will accompany the consciousness of even the first surrender to the laws which secure pardon, and a more intelligent piety will be sure to follow the common-sense presentation of Scriptural Truth, even if the oriental phrases of the Bible and the scholastic phrases of theology should be abandoned for the words of modern every-day speech. The complications and confusion of our theologies will be lost in a return to the simplicity of the early "Gospel"; and piety, standing apart from bewildering metaphysics, will assert its power over the human heart, till a truer "revival" of religion will bind the scattered

fragments of our common Christianity into one cemented whole: Christ, the great Head of the Church, and the perfect Incarnation of God, will continue to receive the adoration of reverent hearts who see in Him no merely human equal, but the "express image" of the one God and Father of all.

But, in view of this presentation of Christianity, where is the necessity for that complicated "scheme" or "plan" of suppositions and "expedients" which has usurped the sacred name of "orthodoxy"? The government of God totters not by the spread of insubordination, and needs no prudential props, to maintain its integrity. The offences of millions can never affect the supremacy of God; and those schemes which may be necessary to preserve human authority and law from anarchy can never find any place in the government of Him who changes not. In no human government is the punishment of an offence necessary to the pardon of that offence. How, then, in view of what has been said of Wesley's later views and their logical consequences, can we persist in applying to the divine government principles conceived in a day when the basis and laws even of human government were little understood —principles which modern experience proves to be founded in no facts of nature, human or divine? If pardon can be granted where the penalty of offence is not exacted, but where it is found that justice and mercy are both satisfied without the infliction of punishment,—if we find this the case in earthly governments, domestic and political, every day and every year of our lives,—if the ends of government are secured by the return of the offender to obedience, and if this return can be secured, as it often is, nay, as it most frequently is, by other means than punishment, either of the offender or his substitute,—wherein lies the necessity for an "infinite sacrifice" to secure the pardon of one who needs but to realize the love of Him whom he has offended, in order to melt in penitence at his feet? If the antecedent necessity for such an "infinite sacrifice" is a fallacy, then wherein lies the necessity for an infinite divine "hypostasis" to constitute such a sacrifice, and any combination of "hypostases" at all in the being of the One God and Father of all? Wesley's later view of "saving faith" destroys this antecedent necessity, and, with it, the whole speculative fabric we found upon it.

2. *Wesley's abandonment of the supposed Scriptural character of the terms "heresy" and "heretics," as now used,*

abandons the only ground on which this sacerdotal "orthodoxy" can be maintained.—On Acts XXIV., 14, he says: "*Heresy.*—This appellation St. Paul corrects. Not that "it was then an odious word; but it was not honorable "enough. A party or sect (so that word signifies) is "formed by men." On 2 Peter II., 1, he says: "Heresies, "that is, divisions." On Titus III., 10, he says of the term "heretic": "As for the popish sense, 'A man that errs in "fundamentals,' although it crept, with many other things, "early into the Church, yet it has no shadow of foundation, "either in the Old or New Testament." Part of his note on 1 Cor. XI., 18, may be repeated: "So wonderfully have "later ages distorted the words heresy and schism from "their Scriptural meaning. Heresy is not, in all the Bible, "taken for 'an error in fundamentals,' or in anything else; "nor schism, for any separation from the outward com-"munion of others. Therefore both heresy and schism, in "the modern sense of the words, are sins that the Scripture "knows nothing of; but were invented merely to deprive "mankind of the benefit of private judgment, and liberty "of conscience." As bearing upon these expressions, from the ultimate standards of Methodist theology, the following passage from Sermon LXXIV., may not be out of place here: "I dare not exclude from the Church Catholic all "those congregations in which any unscriptural doctrines, "which cannot be affirmed to be 'the pure word of God,' "are sometimes, yea, frequently, preached; neither all "those congregations in which the sacraments are not "'duly administered.' Certainly, if these things are so, "the Church of Rome is not so much as a part of the "Catholic Church; seeing therein neither is 'the pure "word of God' preached, nor the sacraments 'duly ad-"ministered.' Whoever they are that have 'one Spirit, "one hope, one Lord, one faith, one God and Father of "all,' I can easily bear with their holding wrong opinions, "yea, and superstitious modes of worship: nor would I, on "these accounts, scruple still to include them within the "pale of the Catholic Church; neither would I have any "objection to receive them, if they desired it, as members "of the Church of England." This sermon was preached in 1788: when a century has passed, will the Christian and ecclesiastical statesmanship of the world have risen to the high charity and Godlike comprehension of John Wesley? Oh! for that time when the hearts of men, softened by the distant strains of music from the nearing

heaven, shall melt in the love of one common Lord, forgetting the jarring creeds of a speculative but ignorant age, and rising above the petty differences of æsthetic taste displayed in forms of robes or rituals, shall cry to each other from the thousand fanes of Christian prayer, from snowy Canada to India's heated plains, "if thy heart be as my heart, give me thy hand!" But touching reveries of the coming glory must give place to that stern conflict of thought which is the preparation for the glorious unity to come; and John Wesley's words must be analyzed, to find their bearing on the dogmas that keep Christian hearts divided from each other. Now, it will be evident from the foregoing quotations that Wesley traced the division of Christians into the two hostile camps of "orthodox" and "heretics," not to the Bible, but to Rome. The Bible furnishes no foundation for such a classification. The explanations of Scriptural facts on which such a division is based have been put forth by Rome, to lead men to Rome. They were enforced as truth in order to limit human liberty, and subject it to the external authority of a self-styled "Catholic Church." To the assumed infallibility of this "Church," then, we must trace the origin of all the authority that lies in this distinction of "heretics" and "orthodox"; and to that same infallibility must that distinction lead, if we persevere in maintaining it. Who pronounces the Unitarian or the Quaker a "heretic?" A certain body that assumes to itself the title of "the Church." On what authority does it so pronounce? It asserts that the "heretic's" opinions are contrary to the "Word of God," or the Bible. On what authority does it call the Bible the "Word of God?" There is no one passage in the Scriptures in which the terms are, or could be, synonymous. It calls it so on its own authority. As Dr. Whedon, in a quotation given before, assures us, the Church made the Bible,—put together its various parts, and called them "Bible," to the exclusion of everything else. But granting that the term "Word of God" is a true description of the Bible, — for there is a sense in which it may be so called,—on what authority does this "Church" assert that the Quaker's, or the Unitarian's, interpretation of it is wrong? These "heretics" accept the Bible as well as their censors, and build their Christianity upon it. If this self-styled "Catholic Church" wishes to base the patristic "orthodoxy," or explanation of the fundamental Scriptural facts, on the Bible, it must do so,

either because criticism finds that explanation there, or because some other authority says that is the sense in which the Bible must be taken. But criticism does not find it there, as is evident from the fact that good and learned men receive the Bible and yet reject the "orthodoxy" of Rome, though their goodness and learning are not inferior to those of others who do not reject that interpretation of the Bible. The only other authority to which we can appeal is the "Church." But if so, we must define the "Church." It cannot, to such men, mean all who, in any sense, acknowledge Christ; for these have no unanimous voice in favor of this "orthodoxy." Therefore we must limit the "Church" to some divinely authorized and constituted organization. But, if such exists, any breach of its unity, or separation from its order, is a crime. We must go back to the unity before the establishment of the Greek Church as a separate organization, to find any form of Christianity which will answer the demands of our investigation; and when we do think we have found it, what does it amount to? Simply this. The voice of the "Church" cries: "You must receive the Bible as such, be- "cause I made it. You must take it in my sense, because I "say so, and, as I have made it, I ought to know what it "means. I put together these scattered treatises, because "they accorded with my convictions; and, if they had not so "accorded, I should have rejected them, just as I did other "treatises. If you do not find this 'orthodoxy' and infalli- "bility in the Bible, so much the worse for the Book. I "am the mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost, and am not "dependent upon the Bible." That this is not a misrepresentation of the line of argument pursued by "church" writers may be seen from the following quotations from Manning's "Temporal Mission," pages 173-6: "It may "be from 'intellectual obtuseness,' or 'want of the critical "faculty,' or 'obstinate adherence to preconceived belief'; "but it makes little impression on me to be told that S. "Stephen, in Acts VII., 16, fell into an historical error in "saying that Jacob was buried in Sichem. I confess that "I cannot explain the difficulty, and that the explanations "usually given, though possible and even probable, are "hardly sufficient. Nevertheless, I am not shaken in the "least as to the divine axiom, that Holy Scripture is "exempt from all error. Nor, again, when we read in one "place that King Solomon had 4,000 stalls for horses, in "another, 40,000; nor that King Josias began to reign at

"eight years of age, in another place at eighteen. Why "should we be ashamed of saying with S. Augustine, 'Let "'us believe and immovably affirm that in Scripture false-"'hood has no place. Adore in the Gospel what you do "'not as yet understand, and adore it all the more in pro-"'portion as it is now hidden from you.' And if it should "seem irrational and perverse to shut our eyes to difficul-"ties, as men say, we can but answer—We neither derive "our religion from the Scriptures, nor does it depend upon "them. The centre and source of all our certainty is the "perpetual Voice of the Church of God." Here, let it be observed, (*a*) that it is only on the basis of church infallibility that men are branded as "heretics" in the theological sense of the word; (*b*) that to reject the distinction between "heretics" and "orthodox," in that sense, is to rejeet the foundation of that distinction, which is church infallibility; (*c*) that to accept that infallibility is to blind one's eyes to patent facts, and believe that Sichem and not-Sichem, eight and eighteen, are one and the same; *(d)* that the abandonment of the distinction of men, theologically, into "heretics" and "orthodox" renders it possible that right thinking may be on the side of the so-called heretic, and error on the side of the so-called orthodox; *(e)* that the test of right thinking must be found elsewhere than merely in the Bible, which evidently, apart from some common standard of interpretation, does not settle the points at issue,—or in church authority, which, on the one hand, imposes upon the Bible a meaning foreign from it, and, on the other, ignores facts patent to every critical investigator of the Bible, demands of those who ignore those facts a stultification of their own intelligence, and, when pressed by those who cannot stultify themselves, shifts its ground, and rejects the Bible altogether; *(f)* and that Mr. Wesley, having abandoned both the Scriptural and the "church" foundation for this distinction, must be held responsible for the logical consequences of the abandonment.

Thus, we are not merely led to the conviction that Mr. Wesley's view of "saving faith" renders the patristic orthodoxy unnecessary to a truly Arminian and evangelical view of Christianity, but that he abandoned the only foundation on which that system of speculative dogmas can rest.

3. Wesley's abandonment of the "Athanasian" creed is the abandonment of the whole "orthodoxy" of which that creed is the highest exponent. It is necessary, in order to form any

correct ideas of the bearing of Wesley's views on modern controversy, that he should be, so far as is possible, his own interpreter. His general writings furnish the best clue to his mature conceptions of the matter presented in the legal standards of Methodism. His Notes were published in 1754. In 1775, he published his Sermon on the Trinity, from 1 John v., 7. It is impossible, apart from that sermon, and scattered passages in his other writings, to form any true opinions of his views on the subject referred to. A few extracts from the sermon, then, even at the risk of repetition, are necessary. Alluding to his text, he says: "I do not mean that it is of importance to believe this or "that *explication* of these words. I know not that any well-"judging man would attempt to explain them at all. One "of the best tracts which that great man, Dean Swift, ever "wrote, was his Sermon upon the Trinity. Herein he "shows that all who endeavored to explain it at all have "utterly lost their way; have, above all other persons, hurt "the cause which they intended to promote, having only, "as Job speaks, 'darkened counsel by words without know-"'ledge.' It was in an evil hour that these explainers "began their fruitless work. I insist upon no explication "at all; no, not even the best I ever saw; I mean that "which is given us in the creed commonly ascribed to "Athanasius."

Further on, he says: "I dare not insist upon any one's "using the word Trinity or Person." "I would insist only "on the direct words, unexplained, just as they lie in the "text: 'There are three that bear record in heaven, the "'Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three "'are one.'" "The Bible barely requires you to believe "such facts, not the manner of them. Now the mystery "does not lie in the *fact*, but altogether in the *manner*." "——the Bible does not require you to believe *any mystery* "*at all*." "I believe this *fact* also (if I may use the ex-"pression), that God is three and one. But the *manner*, "*how*, I do not comprehend; and I do not believe it. Now "in this, in the manner, lies the mystery; and so it may; "I have no concern with it: it is no object of my faith: I "believe just so much as God has revealed, and no more. "But this, the *manner*, he has not revealed; therefore I "believe nothing about it." ....." But the thing which I "here particularly mean is this: the knowledge of the "Three-One God is interwoven with all true Christian "faith, with all vital religion."

To the last sentence, penned in 1775, must be added the following, written in 1786: "I cannot argue against matter "of fact. I dare not deny that Mr. Firmin was a pious "man; although his notions of the Trinity were quite "erroneous."

Here, let it be noted: (1) that it must be absurd to insist, after the lapse of one hundred and twenty-three years from the publication of the "Notes," on explanations of the Bible publicly abandoned by Wesley himself after the lapse of, successively, twenty-one, and thirty-two, years from that publication; (2) that, in Wesley's later opinion, the Bible contains no explanation of the Trinity, in its so-called "orthodox" sense, of a Unity made up of three "hypostases"; (3) that all attempts to *explain* what he, to the day of his death, took for a revealed "fact" must end in failure, and have so ended; (4) that the evidence that this threefold unity in God is a fact rested on the distinct statement of the Bible to that effect, and on the testimony of universal Christian consciousness; (5) that, in 1786, he abandoned the testimony of Christian consciousness to that supposed fact, in view of the other fact that such consciousness could co-exist with the denial of that threefold unity; (6) that his retention of this threefold unity rested ultimately only on the distinct assertion of Scripture that such unity existed in heaven; (7) that Scriptural facts and facts of personal observation were of co-ordinate authority for our beliefs, and that, where what seemed to be Scriptural facts were in any way doubtful, trustworthy facts of observation should decide the sense in which Scripture ought to be taken: he thought Scriptural fact warranted the exclusion of Unitarians from the pale of Christianity: he abandoned that view of Scripture on the evidence of observation; (8) that, thus, Scripture was interpreted by him through the use of his own Reason, and not by reverence for that misappropriated Scriptural allusion, which has no reference to church authority in doctrinal matters, but only in moral conduct, and which is contained in the anathema: "Woe to him who refuses to 'hear the Church';" (9) that, by the use of this Reason, he rejected, not merely the damnatory clauses of the so-called Athanasian creed, but its whole explanatory hypothesis; and (10) that, with this creed, he abandons the authority of any "mystery" at all, either over our belief or our teaching.

But no presentation of the so-called "orthodoxy,"

except the Athanasian creed, will bear investigation for an hour. It is, itself, a mass of provoking contradictions; but any other exposition of "orthodoxy" lands us in incomprehensible propositions, or in tri-theism. Let any one, apart from the terminology and thought of that creed, try to formulate to himself his view of the Trinity in Unity, and he will find himself mercilessly driven to the abandonment of thought at all, to tri-theism, or to a Trinity of masks assumed by the one Deity. If he say: "I do not understand; I believe," it is the abandonment of his own thought in the acceptance of the thoughts of others. If we recognize Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three phases assumed by God in the work of redemption, these phases are but masks—the old and true sense of "persons"—assumed by the one Deity; and we have no real Trinity in Unity at all. If we recognize Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as being "persons" in the modern sense of the word, having each a distinct intelligence, consciousness, and will, these are but attributes of beings so distinct that they are really three Gods; and, if the Unity of God has so little of numerical one-ness about it, who can deny Manning and some of the "fathers" their unity of immensity, with its semi-materialistic conception of God, and its possibility of *four* persons, yes, *four thousand*, or all the gods of Olympus, in the compass of its vastness? To be "orthodox" in the technical sense of that term adopted by what is called the "Western Church," we must accept the Athanasian creed. But Wesley abandoned that creed. "I believe nothing about it," said he, referring, not to its anathema, but to its explanations. What is this, but to reject the whole logical process of which it is the legitimate conclusion? What is this but to reject the premises from which that conclusion is drawn? What is this but to bundle out of doors the whole patristic crowd of monkish speculators,—to lay on the lash of small cords, till the tribe of buyers and sellers of monkish mysteries and the souls of men are driven from their seats of authority in the temple of God?

If it is thought a matter of questionable propriety to interpret Mr. Wesley's notes in the light of his subsequently-formed opinions, and not leave them as they first came from his pen, let it be remembered how little love of Truth is involved in keeping to what he himself abandoned, namely, all explanations of the Trinity, even that one given in the creed called "Athanasian." Nor must

it be forgotten that this process has been already adopted. It is well known that any theory of the origin of souls decides the theological question of hereditary tendencies to evil. In Mr. Wesley's Journals as quoted before, he abandons the theory of infusion of souls for that of traduction; and, on this, Dr. Stevens* says: "Correct by these his note on Heb. XII., 9." Where the standards, then, are capable of bearing the truer interpretation, the false and the abandoned should certainly not be insisted upon. Let the principle apply in this case, also; and the standards will express, not Mr. Wesley's cruder views, but his most mature convictions.

How far this liberality of sentiment should be extended in any body claiming to be a church, may be learned from his Notes and his Sermons. Where a godly fear and a righteous life exist, Mr. Wesley held that no peculiarities of doctrinal view, and no regulations founded by authority, should deprive men of the rights of church-membership. On Acts X., 17, he says: "And *who are* we *that* we *should* "*withstand God?* Particularly by laying down rules of "Christian communion which exclude any whom he has "admitted into the Church of the first-born from wor-"shipping God together. O that all Church governors "would consider how bold an usurpation this is on the "authority of the supreme Lord of the Church! O that "the sin of thus withstanding God may not be laid to the "charge of those who, perhaps with a good intention, but "in an over-fondness for their own forms, have done it, "and are continually doing it." Here, he evidently teaches that no church should adopt terms of fellowship which are narrower than catholic. But, should the same liberty be accorded to those who preach? In his Sermon, No. XXXVIII., on Mark IX., 38-39, he lays down, in section III., 3, the test of a man's call to preach, namely, the fact of his preaching turning men from sin to a Christian life. The tenor of the sermon is that, where the preaching of layman or clergyman will bear this test, no diversity of opinion, no alliance with any particular party in the Church, no difference of church relations, and no existing personal animosities, should lead to anything calculated to stop him from preaching. The ground of the whole is that, where God has given the ability to preach, and has made the preaching useful, God has called the preacher to exercise his gifts; and, if God has called, who shall forbid

* Hist., p. 690, Eng. ed.

him to answer the call? "Beware how you attempt to "hinder him, either by your authority, or arguments, or "persuasions. Do not in any wise strive to prevent his "using all the power which God has given him. *If you "have authority with him, do not use that authority to stop "the work of God.* Persuade him not to depart from the "work. If he should give place to *the devil and you*, many "souls might perish in their iniquity; but their blood "would God require at *your* hands." If Mr. Wesley thought it wrong and satanic to "persuade" to a departure "from the work," what would he say of any who would *compel* it? "Forbid him not; no, not at the peril of your "soul. Shall not God work by whom he will work? No "man can do these works unless God is with him; unless "God hath sent him for this very thing. But if *God* hath "sent him, will *you* call him back? Will you forbid him "to go?" The work of bringing sinners to God Mr. Wesley calls "casting out devils;" and he says: "when I "have reasonable proof that any man does cast out devils, "whatever others do, I dare not forbid him, lest I be found "even to fight against God." "And whosoever thou art "that fearest God, 'forbid him not,' either directly or in- "directly. — You indirectly forbid him, when you dis- "courage him in his work, by drawing him into disputes "concerning it, by raising objections against it, *or fright- "ing him with consequences* which very possibly will never "be. You forbid him when you show any unkindness "toward him either in language or behavior. O forbid "him not in any of these ways!" "If we willingly fail "in any of these points, if we either directly or indirectly "forbid him, 'because he followeth not us,' then we are "bigots." "Examine yourself,— Do I not indirectly at "least forbid him on any of these grounds? Am I not "sorry that God should thus own and bless a man that "holds such erroneous opinions?— If you do any of these "things, you are a bigot to this day." "In order to "examine ourselves thoroughly, let the case be proposed "in the strongest manner. What, if I were to see a "Papist, an Arian, a Socinian, casting out devils? If "I did, I could not forbid even him, without convicting "myself of bigotry. Yea, if it could be supposed that I "should see a Jew, a Deist, or a Turk, doing the same, "were I to forbid him either directly or indirectly, I should "be no better than a bigot still."

"Encourage whomsoever God is pleased to employ, to

" give himself wholly up thereto. Enlarge, so far as you " can, his sphere of action ; show him all kindness in word " and deed ; and cease not to cry to God in his behalf, " that he may save both himself and them that hear him."

If any suspicion remains that this liberal view of things is to prevail only amongst ministers of different churches, and not amongst those of the same church, toward each other, let the reader refer to the third paragraph of the second head of this sermon ; and he will find that diversity of opinion is spoken of as existing in the same church ; and, as an illustration of this, he alludes to the case of the Apostles themselves : " Difference of opinion sprang up— " in real Christians ; nay, in the very chief of them, the " Apostles themselves ! Nor does it appear that the dif- " ference which then began was ever entirely removed. We " do not find that even those pillars in the temple of God, " so long as they remained upon the earth, were ever " brought to think alike." He speaks, too, of those over whom we have " authority," evidently alluding to ministers of the same church.

If the reader still doubts that Mr. Wesley regarded this broad basis as the proper one, let him refer to the language quoted in a previous division of this work, where, at the time when Methodism deserved the boast of catholicity, the founder of that system laid down the relation of the individual members of the Conference to the majority, so that, in speculative matters, the authority of the latter was not to control any man's convictions, and, in practical matters, was to be binding only so far as the individual conscience could submit. Then will it be seen how far reaching was John Wesley's abandonment of the authority of Church and creed. To deny any well-supported *fact* would have been fatal to the honor and piety of any of his preachers ; and it would, doubtless, have been followed by ecclesiastical excision ; diversity of speculative views was not to be followed even by an unkind word, much less the excommunicative exercise of authority. What Mr. Wesley regarded as the essential *facts* of Christianity may be seen from his sermon on " Reason." * In this discourse, treating of the use of Reason, he says : " And how is it possible " without it to understand the essential truths contained " therein ? (*i.e.*, in the Scriptures,) *a beautiful summary of* " *which we have in that which is called the Apostles' Creed.*" It will be remembered that this creed gives no attempts at

* Serm. LXX., I., 6.

explanations, but keeps to the unexplained facts of the earliest Christian times. Had Methodism retained the spirit of its founder, would it now regard dogmatical stagnation as a virtue, and boast of what is in reality a reproach to its intelligence?

4. *Wesley's theological method uproots entirely this so-called "orthodoxy."* Wesley's method, adopted by himself, claimed as a right, followed as a duty, fearlessly, in the presence of the most appalling opposition, and as fearlessly recommended to others, was simply consistent Protestantism,—the use of private judgment, and loyalty to facts, let these come from whatever quarter they may, and lead to whatever consequences they must. The method of ascertaining whether any dogma or dogmas correspond to facts or not has been pointed out. Let this method be applied to this so-called "orthodoxy"; and the overthrow of the greatest barrier to the perfect success of Christianity is secured.

It remains only to present a summary of the thoughts of this chapter.

The standards of Methodist theology, in Canada and England, are Wesley's first fifty-three sermons, and his Notes on the New Testament. By these, every other formulary must be tested. Of these standards, Mr. Wesley must be his own interpreter, by means of his other writings. The opinions expressed in these standards are often contradictory, and cannot all be held by any one person, so that every preacher who has any definite views at all will find himself "contrary to" something that "is contained in" them. Some views in the Notes and Sermons are explicitly corrected and abandoned by Wesley himself. Harmony, amidst the contradictions, must arise from observing the thread of Wesley's own mental development, and from preserving his own Arminian principles and his Protestant method. This method was distinctly asserted at his first Conference, was subsequently recognized in his later writings, and was to the effect that, if the fundamental principles of Methodism were not capable of bearing the closest scrutiny, or stood in the way of the general interests of Christianity and practical religion, the sooner they were abandoned the better,—and that, for the more thorough testing of these principles, speculative questions were left to the individual conscience, and practical ones were to be decided by the majority, yet only so far as not to infringe on individual consciences. No theories, or explanations, or mysteries, of speculative, or systematic, theology, or

popular opinion, should be enforced at all. Facts of Scripture alone should be insisted upon. These facts must be elicited by free criticism. They are summarized in the Apostles' Creed. As these facts are unfolded, our theology, like Wesley's own, should be modified by them. These facts necessarily lead to an abandonment of the mis-named "orthodoxy" for certain fundamental thoughts common to all forms of Christianity, under whatever conflicting dogmatic statements they may be presented. This abandonment is the only safety for Protestantism from ultimate loss in Sacerdotalism or irreligion. As humanity must have a religion of some kind, the world's fate lies between the respective principles and methods of John Wesley and Ignatius Loyola ; and Methodism can again be catholic in the true sense of the term.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RELATIONS OF METHODISM.

§ 1.

To Modern Religious Thought.

The characteristics and tendencies of modern thought furnish a study not only interesting, but necessary to him who aims at the good of mankind. The literature which embodies this thought is bewildering in its abundance. The patient toil, and the extensive and minute research of Germany furnish the basis for wide generalizations, as well as for the clear and popular productions of the French and the English mind. Even Spain and Italy raise their eloquent voices in behalf of one phase or another of that thought which everywhere is so active to-day ; and distant India, wakened into a new life by its contact with English literature and Christian thought, contributes its share to the solution of problems which agitate the minds of our young Canadian nation.

Modern thought is pre-eminently religious, if that term can be properly employed to designate the object, and not the tone and temper, of our investigations. History, philosophy, and science, all trench upon religion ; and their religious bearings are largely the source of their attractions.

Modern thought is radical. It deals not merely with the leaves and twigs, nor even with the boughs and branches, of religion ; but it goes to the very roots. Petty polemics still rage, but the great controversy is not now about forms of baptism or postures of worship, but about the origin and necessity of any religion at all.

Modern thought is intensely earnest. The time is coming when, as this thought spreads amongst the church-going masses, as it is spreading beyond them, it will demand stronger food than the "Lives of the Saints," whether these saints are Romish or Protestant. The trashy fiction, too, which is the strongest food many can now bear, will soon become distasteful in the midst of the anxious search for the true and the good which modern thought is awakening.

Modern literature reveals the fact that thought is arranging itself along two distinct and divergent lines, and toward ends which are not merely antagonistic, but mutually destructive. The end is Sacerdotalism, or Reason ; and there is no middle way. It is a mistake to say that the end is Reason or Revelation, because the terms are not mutually exclusive ; but Sacerdotalism and Reason cannot exist together. This does not mean that Sacerdotalists are not intelligent or learned or reasonable ; but it means that the system of thought and organization which we designate by the term Sacerdotalism cannot live if it attempts to base its claims on Reason.

The common centre from which these lines diverge is the question,—is any thought or system of thoughts to be received as true because it is divine, or divine because it is true? The foundation of this is in the philosophical question whether moral distinctions are the product of arbitrary will, or are natural and immutable. The first alternative places the ultimate source of authority in what is external to the man: the second, in the internal. The first makes theology mechanical ; the second, dynamical. The first places its ideal of perfection in the past, and, therefore, represses progress ; the second, for a perfect conception and expression of the true and the good, looks to the future, and, therefore, lives only in the atmosphere of progress. The ecclesiasticism of the first must be sacerdotal; that of the second makes every man a king and a priest. The genius of the first tends to solidarity ; that of the second, to individualism. The natural ally of the first is despotism ; that of the second is freedom. We can thus

perceive how our civilization and our liberties are linked up with thoughts which some think of no moment, and which others, from a mistaken view of what constitutes the "Gospel," desire to banish from the pulpit, the great source of popular education on religious subjects.

Unfortunately, our Protestant theology is based on a Romish foundation. We have practically accepted the first of the two alternatives, or, if we hold the second, we fear to accept its legitimate and logical consequences; and it is no wonder that Rome threatens to overwhelm us. Let us take the central idea of Christianity, — "God is love." Why do you believe that to be true? Doubtless, some will say: "Because Jesus said so." But how do you know that Jesus spoke the truth? "Because of the attestation of his miracles." But how do you know the miracles ever took place? "Because the Bible says so." But how do you know the Bible is true? The collected books we call "the Bible" were taken from amongst many such books, some of which are quoted as authority for its statements, though not incorporated in it: who selected the books, and how did they know that these were "Bible," and the others not? "The Church so decided." So we are, at last, brought to the supreme authority of the Church in matters of thought! But the Church, if it makes any utterance at all, must have a mouthpiece, some authorized or tacitly accepted exponent of its views, and that cannot be less infallible than the body, when speaking for that body; hence, if we recognize the Church as infallible, we come to the essence of the papacy. In the contest for supremacy, Rome will be sure to vindicate the claims of *her* Pope, from any definition of the term "Church" which Sacerdotalists may adopt. Thus our present Protestant theological standpoint lands us, logically, first in High-churchism, and then in Rome. Is there no other basis for our conviction that God is Love than the mere dictum of external authority? Euripides, nearly five hundred years before Christ, in his "Iphigenia in Tauris," put into the mouth of his heroine the following words: "But I reproach the "devices of the goddess, who if any one work the death of "a man, or touch with hands a woman newly delivered, "or a corpse, restrains him from her altars, as deeming "him impure, but yet herself takes pleasure in man-slay-"ing sacrifices. It cannot be that the consort of Jove, "Latona, hath brought forth so much ignorance. I even "disbelieve the banquets of Tantalus set before the gods,

" as that they should be pleased with feeding on a boy. " But I deem that those in this land, being themselves " man-slayers, charge the goddess with their own baseness ; " for I think not that any one of the gods is bad." I do not ask what external authority taught Euripides the great truth of the essential goodness of Deity, for it is only by objective revelations that the occasions are furnished for ascertaining any truth ; but, when he condemned the low anthropomorphism which predicated of Deity the passions of abnormal humanity, and when he felt that anthropomorphism is right only when it predicates of Deity what is essential to the highest ideal of our mental and moral nature, did his belief rest ultimately on testimony, or on the necessary convictions of his own mind? We, too, feel that only so far as we are loving are we right ; and, as we can form no conception of God higher than that which is highest and best in us, raised beyond the limitations of the created, we instinctively feel that God must be what we should be were we perfect, that is, Love. All questions must, therefore, rest *ultimately* on the trustworthiness of our mental and moral nature.

But we cannot demonstrate even our own existence. The celebrated expression of Descartes, " I think, therefore I am," supposes the existence of the " I " which is the very thing to be proved. Absolute certainty, therefore, or infallibility, is entirely out of the question ; and all the certainty we can hope to have is that confidence which we feel in the trustworthiness of our faculties. Is this a sufficient basis on which to construct our theology, our religion, our morals, our civilization, without attempting to construct an external infallibility in presence of which Reason must cease to act? If we can, then Theology may rest on Reason. " See," says Wesley, in Sermon LXX., " of what service it (Reason) is both in laying the foundation " of true religion, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, " and in raising the superstructure." We may, then, trust to what is "vulgarly termed natural conscience," to lay even "the foundation of true religion " ; for the conscience is but "the Reason employed about questions of right and wrong."* If we cannot, then Theology must be taken at second hand. But this use of Reason will be called Rationalism ; and Rationalism is popularly understood to deny the supernatural, and thus threaten religion. Does it necessarily do so? What is the supernatural? Is there

* Butler's Sermons. Whewell's Preface, page IX.

not a fallacy lurking in the very word? What is "natural"? If, by this term, we understand only the physical, do we not exclude from nature even the Deity? If by "natural" we mean *fixed*, *established*, *regular*, why exclude from the term "nature" all but the physical? Butler, in his "Analogy," * says of the term "natural": "But the only "distinct meaning of that word is *stated*, *fixed*, or *settled*." "And from hence it must follow that persons' notions of "what is natural will be enlarged in proportion to their "greater knowledge of the works of God, and the dispen- "sations of his providence." If there is a realm of spiritual life connected with the physical, then it, too, is part of the established order of things; and "nature" includes all that is. Our use of the term "super-natural" is, in that case, superfluous; and the natural order of things is truly the divine. Then miracles are not contraventions of natural laws, but the results of the interlacing of the higher and the lower forms of nature.

The great demand of the age is some objective evidence that may confirm the instinctive convictions of Reason that there exists a realm of spiritual being distinct from matter, and that, back of thought, there is something more than mere oxidation of the brain, and, to quote Prof. Bain against himself, that there *is* an "independent spiritual subsistence" behind "the entire compass of our feelings or emotions."† If our theology is still to deserve that name; if Christ is still to be revered; if communion between the mind of man and the mind of God,—the most sublime comfort, and the most ennobling source of inspiration, to man,—is to be anything more than a dream; if the wailing heart of the bereaved is to be cheered by the prospects of again seeing the loved ones around whom death has cast its veil; if all life is not to end in the blankness of "hope deferred,"—then the world demands that its men of science shall examine, as some of them are examining, the foundations and confirmations of that belief in a spiritual world which everywhere and always has been characteristic of healthy and normal humanity.

In the private experience of many, there have been facts which cannot be explained but by the communication of mind with mind at distances, and under circumstances, beyond the control of mere matter. Such facts give a reality to that beautiful picture of Longfellow's :‡

* Tefft's, ed., Part I., chap. i., p. 66. † Mind and Body, p. 8.
‡ Evangeline, Part Second, II.

" After the sound of their oars on the tholes had died in the distance,
" As from a magic trance the sleepers awoke, and the maiden
" Said with a sigh to the friendly priest: 'O Father Felician!
" Something says in my heart that near me Gabriel wanders.
" Is it a foolish dream, an idle and vague superstition?
" Or has an angel passed, and revealed the truth to my spirit?'
" Then, with a blush, she added: 'Alas! for my credulous fancy,
" Unto ears like thine such words as these have no meaning.'
" But made answer the reverend man, and he smiled as he answered:
" 'Daughter, thy words are not idle; nor are they to me without meaning.
" Feeling is deep and still; and the word that floats on the surface
" Is as the tossing buoy, that betrays where the anchor is hidden.
" Therefore trust to thy heart, and to what the world calls illusions.
" Gabriel truly is near thee.'"

It is time, in the name of our common humanity, its interests and its hopes, to cast aside our superstitious fears of the charge of superstition, and boldly face the facts that history, biography, and science present, in favor of a spiritual world. Then can it be most fully shown that Reason does not lead to Atheism, and that Protestantism may, without danger to the interests of humanity, rely completely on the soundness of its fundamental principle,—private judgment, or the exercise of our intellectual and moral powers in the discovery of Truth, unbiased by dictation on the part of others.

That a decisive collision between the two antagonistic forms of Christian thought, the prescriptive and the scientific, has been anticipated, and what is its significance, may be learned from two quotations, the first from Ewer's "Failure of Protestantism," page 55, and the second from Draper's "Conflict between Religion and Science," page 367.

" When the two great clusterings, Protestant and Catholic,
" shall have completed themselves, the one organic, like an
" army, the other disintegrated, like a mob, and the shock
" between the two shall take place, can any one doubt the
" issue?"

" This power (Rome), conscious that it can work no
" miracle to serve itself, does not hesitate to disturb society
" by its intrigues against governments, and seeks to accom-
" plish its ends by alliances with despotism. Claims such
" as these mean a revolt against modern civilization, an
" intention of destroying it, no matter at what social cost.
" To submit to them without resistance, men must be
" slaves indeed! As to the issue of the coming conflict,
" can any one doubt? Whatever is resting on fiction and
" fraud will be overthrown."

In this "shock" and "conflict," Protestant success depends upon an enlightened public opinion. But, on the

questions at issue, public opinion is not in possession of the facts necessary for a decision. So fully has the scholastic theology of the Sacerdotalists become incorporated into our Protestant thought, that it bears, even with us, the name of "right thinking"; and so little do the public know of the history and hollowness of this scholastic theology, that one word against the so-called orthodoxy is sufficient to brand the warmest friend of Protestantism and of *Man* as an enemy not to be tolerated. But the present is no time for temporizing. The case is too serious. It is life or death for one or the other of the two opponents. The utmost frankness and freedom are demanded in the discussion of the debated points.

Several circumstances seem to show that a new presentation of Christianity is imperatively demanded by the times. Lord Northbrook has lately assured the British public that India will become Christian, but only by adopting that primitive form of Christianity which preceded the formation of those speculative dogmas now confounded with its fundamental truths.* Prof. Monier Williams says, in the *London Times* of April 17th, 1876: "A complete disin-
"tegration of ancient faiths is in progress in the upper

* There is a striking passage in the Earl of Northbrook's recent speech at Falmouth which deserves preservation at a time when High Church and Low Church dogmas are being freely discussed by Europeans in India. Lord Northbrook has come home after his term of office as Governor-General with a conviction that is evidently deep rooted, that it is not the part of the Government of India to connect itself with any form of belief or religion in India. To the missionaries must be left the propagation of Christianity; but he gives it as his earnest conviction, after seeing much of India, and visiting districts in which there are thousands of native Christians, that the most suitable road from idolatry and superstition is not necessarily any one of those which our various sects present to the people. He evidently expects that a more primitive form of Christianity will take hold of the natives of India than that which we present. "I believe (he said) that they will go further back and get rid of much of the dogma which has overlaid the foundations of Christianity for nearly 1,800 years; and some of us may live to see them adopt a form of Christianity more nearly approaching the simplicity of the Apostolic church than any which now exists." Lord Northbrook said some sound things at Falmouth about silver; this we take to be golden.—*Homeward Mail.*

To this note on Lord Northbrook and India are added two paragraphs on the Rev. Fergus Ferguson, taken from the "Belfast News-Letter" of March 14th, 1877, each containing remarks not found in the other, and one extract from the "Christian Guardian," of March 26th, 1877, on Principal Tulloch's remarks concerning the Article on the Bible in the new edition of the "Encyclopedia Britannica." They will show how wide-spread is the conviction that a new presentation of Christianity is imperatively demanded:

"The Rev. Fergus Ferguson on the Creed.—The Rev. Fergus Ferguson, in preaching to the Queen's Park U. P. congregation, Glasgow, said the Church had yet to begin the work of constructing her creed on a truly Scriptural and scientific basis. It was monstrous, mischievous, and

"strata of East Indian society. Most of the oldest thinkers "become pure Theists or Unitarians. In almost every "large town there is a *Samaj*, or society of such men, "whose creed would be well expressed by the first part of "the 1st Article of the Church of England. No sooner, "however, is a *Samaj* formed than, as is usual in India, it "splits up into sub-divisions, some founding their theism "on the Veda, others partially appealing to it, and others "rejecting it altogether. Real conversions are certainly "uncommon, nor will they, in my opinion, be more com- "mon until our religion is presented to the Hindus in that "more simple Oriental form which originally belonged to "it on its first foundation at Jerusalem." Here are presented some suggestive facts. The tendency of the Hindu mind, amid the dissolution of former beliefs, is toward an acceptance of Christianity. Learning tends to the rejection of those forms of Christianity which are identified with the scholastic speculations called "orthodoxy." The form of Christianity which the learning of India most favors has no power of external cohesion. This arises from the conflicting claims of external theological authorities. Something, then, in our religion attracts educated and uneducated alike. Something in it repels the educated. The

absurd to suppose that a view of truth attained by a limited number of men in a dark and troubled age of the world should remain the standard of truth for all time."

"The Rev. Fergus Ferguson, of the Queen's Park U. P. Church, Glasgow, gave notice of a motion at the U. P. Presbytery, yesterday, asking for a revision of the Confession of Faith. Mr. Ferguson, alluding to the Confession, said it was monstrous and mischievous to hold that that view of truth formed in a troubled and dark age should remain the standard of the Church for all time. The absurdity of the idea was written on the face of it. It was fit only to be scouted by all reasonable men, and was not entitled to one moment's respect. The revision question seems to meet with more favor in the U. P. Church than in any other branch of the great Presbyterian family."

"Principal Tulloch on Free Thought.—Principal Tulloch, in the March number of the "Contemporary," dwells at length upon Professor Smith's article on the Bible, and says: 'It is surely a fact of momentous significance that such opinions (as are therein contained) should vindicate for themselves a position within the Free Church, and that the prospect should in consequence be the opening up of an entire change in the attitude of the Scotch mind towards the Bible.' Later on, alluding to the Rev. D. Macrae's motion relative to the Confession of Faith, Dr. Tulloch says: 'None can tell what may come of the present movement of thought in Scotland. . . . The current of free thought is running deep and sure in all the churches, even within softened and exclusive precincts, where it makes no noise at all. It will make its way towards the light by-and-by, from all quarters of the ecclesiastical horizon; and the Church which will have most chance may possibly not be any of the present organizations, but a Church more excellent—because at once more liberal and catholic—than any of these now existing.'"

explanation of the phenomena lies in the method of ascertaining the truth.

Of the relations of Science to Christianity, little need be said. So far as the popular phase of our religion is concerned, its method of investigation, and that of Science, are fundamentally antagonistic; and, if Christianity is to retain its hold upon the learning, not of India, but of the world, it must be re-stated, or it can never be re-instated in its former place of power and authority.

The same lesson comes from our schools of Theology. Is it not the case that, when our thoughtful students put to their professors even simple and necessary questions, all the answer often elicited is, "It is a mystery"? Then the hungering mind is directed to ponderous volumes of metaphysical subtlety in which all the treasures of learning and thought seem consecrated to the work of proving that mystery is the normal state of things, and that the less we think the better. Is it any wonder that the professors go to their homes feeling that the men who break stones upon the streets are happier than those whose position demands of them the stultification of their own intelligence, and the stifling of the rising spirit of inquiry in their pupils? Is it any wonder if the students go home from their classes feeling that, out of this mystery, there comes a confusion, a very Babel, which finds its expression in the clangor of the jarring sects? Surely a revision of our theological standards is absolutely demanded.

But what is the new presentation of Christianity to be? Whence is it to come? What will be its effects? The answers must arise from a review of the laws of religious development in the world.

1. Religion, in the sense of theology and ecclesiastical form, not in its proper sense of individual character and life, develops by successive new presentations of its fundamental thoughts. These thoughts are God, moral responsibility, and a future life. These thoughts become clear in conception and expression by successive strides in the progress of intelligence.

2. Each development is preceded by a process of preparation in the public mind. Mosaism in the Jew, philosophy and the decay of Polytheism in the Gentile, prepared the world for Christianity. "With Socrates (Ob. 399, "B.C.), commenced the *positive preparation* for the truth, "accomplished by Greek philosophy." * The culture of

* Kurtz, Vol. I., p. 48.

classical literature prepared the way for Luther. Scepticism, arising from Protestant disintegration, and this again from want of unity and consistency in Protestant methods of investigation, led to such irreligion as created a demand for Methodism. Scientific investigation is now producing a state of mind which calls for a new phase of religious thought and life. "The development of Christianity was "impelled in the *ancient* Church by tradition, in the "*mediæval* by the hierarchy, in the *modern* by science." *

3. The theology of each development arises from an underlying philosophy. Scholasticism arose from a philosophy of the Absolute and the Infinite, expressed in Semitic terminology and imagery. Personal investigation, aroused by the conflicts of Nominalism and the Aristotelian and Platonic Realism, smote the strength of unquestioning submission to authority almost to its death in the fifteenth century. † Wesley's whole system is based on the philosophy of the Freedom of the Will. Anything which denies that destroys his system.

4. Each grand development proceeds from the last one before it, and not from the original stock. Christianity came from Judaism. Romanism came from Christianity. Protestantism came from Rome. Methodism came from the Reformed Church of England. If this is a true law, the world must look to Methodism for the coming Reform. It cannot find such a reform in Oxford Ritualism: that is not a progress, but a retrogression. It cannot find it in Old Catholicism; for that movement would have to pass over the path the world has been pursuing since Luther's day, before it could catch up to that world which is yet so far in advance of it.

5. Each, to preserve its new life, has been compelled to adopt a form suited to itself. The new wine has needed new bottles.

6. The convulsions arising from this changing of form have resulted in the rejection of the new by the old, and, consequently, in inherited narrowness in the new, in the development of fresh evils, in the perpetuation of antagonism between both new and old, and in the retarding of healthy and catholic progress.

7. The destiny of each development is controlled by its underlying philosophy. This will explain the perpetu-

* Kurtz, *Church History*, Vol. II., p. 37.

† D'Aubigné Hist. of Reformation, Book II., p. 34, and Kurtz, Church History, Vol. I., p. 423.

ation of old forms of religion, long after new ones have impelled men to higher progress. Some germ of truth lies in them, and prevents their utter dissolution.

Freedom of the Will implies personal responsibility. This supposes power in the individual to meet the responsibility. This implies a germ of spiritual life in all humanity, if all humanity is free and responsible. This denies the necessity of extra-natural grace arbitrarily imparted, or through sacraments. This is fatal to sacerdotalism and the authority of the "Church." This leaves the individual to rest upon the trustworthiness of his own faculties to gather necessary truth from every source of information, or revelation, open to him.

8. While eminent examples of goodness are confined to no one phase of religion, each successive development creates a higher general type of religious life and character.

From what has already been presented, it may be seen what a responsibility rests upon the Methodist Churches. Will they, on the basis of their founder's principles, proclaim a Christianity in harmony with those of modern thought; or will they, for the sake of a reputation for a misnamed, and, to Methodism, a destructive, Evangelicalism, blindly let the grandest opportunity offered to any modern Church pass from them?

§2.

Relation of Methodism to its own Prosperity.

The subjects discussed in this little work lie at the foundation of great questions now agitating the whole Methodist Church. The rights of laymen to membership apart from obligation to "meet in class;" the right of congregations to a choice of the pastors whom they support; the extension of the term of ministerial residence; the retention of old hymn books, or the adoption of new ones,—all press their claims for immediate attention.

1. *Methodism should return to the simplicity of its first principles.*

(*a*) Liberty of thought must be restored to the preachers. At present, it is assumed that the work of turning men to God is necessarily connected with certain forms of doctrine called "orthodox" and "evangelical." Facts prove that these terms are not synonymous with "right thinking" and "gospel." As regards the latter term, Mr. Wesley's

view of its appropriateness may be gathered from a letter written to Miss Bishop, in 1778, given in his Works, Vol. VII, p. 242, and in which he says: "I find more profit in "sermons on either good tempers, or good works, than "in what are vulgarly called *Gospel sermons*. That term "has now become a mere cant word: I wish none of our "society would use it. It has no determinate meaning. "Let but a pert, self-sufficient animal, that has neither "sense nor grace, bawl out something about Christ, or "his blood, or justification by faith, and his hearers cry "out, 'What a fine Gospel sermon!' Surely the Methodists "have not so learned Christ!" In fact, so decided was Wesley's stand against Calvinism, that Dr. Rigg, in the "Contemporary Review" for October, 1876, asserts his belief that, were the founder of Methodism now alive, he would be in the ranks of the "Broad Church." Facts, again, prove that, from the days when Ulfilas tempered the ferocity of the Goths, when Schleiermacher led so thoroughly to God the Jewish David Mendel that the latter assumed the name of Neander, "the new man," to the days in which Unitarians are said to have rejoiced in the return to Christianity of Professor F. W. Newman, "orthodoxy" has not been alone in its power to convert souls to God and to Christ. Wesley, himself, commands that no means be taken to drive or persuade either an Arian or a Socinian from preaching, or from connection with the Church, if he is found to bring men's hearts and lives to God; for that fact puts upon him the stamp of God's approval, which no man has a right to gainsay. Piety alone is essential to Christianity or Methodism. Each is a life, not a fixed creed or an unchanging organization. A Methodist, Mr. Wesley defined, in his English Dictionary with the celebrated humorous preface, as "One that lives according to "the method laid down in the Bible."* If Methodism is a life, then, why narrow it to the limits of a sect? Why not assert its own Christian breadth? Let the central question,—what are the preacher's fruits in bringing men's hearts and lives into a richer likeness to Christ?—become the one essential question. If it is answered satisfactorily, who has the right to interfere with his opinions or teaching? "To his own master he standeth or falleth."

Who gives men any right to prescribe another's thoughts or expressions? No one in earth or heaven! To attempt to do so is an impertinence.

* Works, Vol. VII., p. 534, Note.

Let Methodism return to the principles of her first Conference. If unanimity of thought is desirable, let time be given at each Conference for the frank discussion of such doctrines as affect practical work; and let no terrors of "friendly investigations," or cross-questionings at District Meetings, prevent the development of any preacher's intellectual or moral manhood. Then will the prominence given to Christian and gentlemanly love spread everywhere a greater likeness to Christ. The Church will be purer, and the world will grow better.

On this point, it is a real act of self-denial not to quote the bulk of what Paley has written on "Subscription to Articles of Faith"; but a few sentences must be given. "The Popes, when they assumed the power of the Apostles, "laid claim, also, to their infallibility; and in this they were "consistent. Protestant churches renounce with all their "might this infallibility, whilst they apply to themselves "every expression that describes it, and will not part with "a jot of the authority which is built upon it." Of the plea that the Church has a right to prescribe its own terms of communion, and its standard of requirement for the ministry, he says: "All which, in plainer English, comes "to this; that two or three men, betwixt two and three "centuries ago, fixed a multitude of obscure and dubious "propositions, which many millions after must bring themselves to believe." "—— it is one of the first duties a "Christian owes to his Master, 'to keep his mind open and "unbiased' in religious inquiries. Can a man be said to "do this who must bring himself to assent to opinions proposed by another? who enters into a profession where "both his subsistence and success depend upon his continuance in a particular persuasion?" "It has been "thought to detract considerably from the pretended use "of these subscriptions, that they excluded none but the "conscientious; a species of men more wanted, we conceive, than formidable, to any religious establishment." "—— as the hearers are at liberty to believe preachers or "no, as they see, or he produces, reasons for what he says, "there can be no harm, and there is a manifest utility, in "trusting him with the liberty of explaining his own meaning in his own terms." "If a Christian can think it an "intolerable thing to worship one God through one mediator, Jesus Christ, in company with any such as differ from "him in their notions about the metaphysical nature of "Christ, or of the Holy Ghost, or the like, I am sorry for

" it. But whatever those men may please themselves with " thinking, who are sure they are arrived at the perfect " knowledge of the most abstruse points, this they may be " certain of, that in the present state of the church, *even* " *supposing only such as are accounted orthodox to be joined* " *together in one visible communion, they communicate together* " *with a very great variety and confusion of notions*, either " comprehending nothing plain and distinct, or differing " from one another as truly and as essentially as others " differ from them all ; nay, with more certain difference " with relation to the object of worship than if all prayers " were directed (as Bishop Bull says almost all were in the " first ages) to God or the Father, through the Son." His closing sentence is too suggestive to be omitted : " As the " man who attacks a flourishing establishment writes with " a halter round his neck, few ever will be found to attempt " alterations but men of more spirit than prudence, of more " sincerity than caution, of warm, eager, and impetuous " tempers ; that, consequently, if we are to wait for im- " provement till the cool, the calm, the discreet part of " mankind begin it, till church governors solicit, or minis- " ters of state propose it—I will venture to pronounce that " (without *His* interposition with whom nothing is impos- " sible) we may remain as we are till the 'renovation of all " things.' "

(b) Liberty should be restored to the members of the Church. Not one rash or unkind word would the writer use against class-meetings. They have been, and are, blessed to the great majority of the members of the Methodist churches ; and, in one form or another, they will be a blessing to the end of time. But there are phases of experience to which they are ill adapted. There are natures to which they are almost entirely unsuited. The repetition of their subjective scrutiny at such brief intervals as a week becomes, at times, irksome, and tends, in no small degree, by its concentration of thought on self, to the development of an offensive denominational egotism, and to a morbid emotionalism. To exclude persons from the Church simply for not "attending class" implies what is a slander on every church which does not adopt these classes,—that, without them, piety is either questionable or absent,—and is to deprive the churches of the help of many noble souls, or else to take their money, but give them no voice in the management of the organization they support. This must come to an end ; and, if the fearing of God and

the working of righteousness is everywhere accepted with God, the very works of men will be test enough of the inward reverence, without imposing upon them arbitrary rules of church communion. If the benefits of the classes are to be continued, let them rest on their own merits. Then will they be made profitable, or die. If any still refuse to attend them, let the class-leaders, as under-pastors, visit the absentees, as when classes were first organized, and all good ends will be secured.

Thus, no revolution is demanded; but the restoration of old principles and practices can meet the existing necessities.

The arguments of Paley against subscription to Articles and Creeds apply, in no small degree, to the prescription of any conventional rules. He does not argue for the total abolition of creeds, but for the elimination from them of their merely local and temporary elements; and rules of life must be imposed by church authorities; yet they, too, should not perpetually enforce the merely conventional. The liberties of men and churches should be limited only by the boundaries of spiritual life. The aim of the Church is to promote that life; and, so long as it exists, no man or body of men has any right to curb its development. Christ was the grandest example at once of prudent regard for right and truth in the conventional rules of society, and the independent assertion of his personal liberties. After him, Paul is the noblest assertor of the rights of individual consciences, both in thought and observances. Let their example have due weight. A study of the history of all churches from early Christianity down to our own day proves that schisms arise from the tyranny of authority more than from the perversity of individuals. It was so in those times when almost every independent thought was branded as a heresy, till one cannot, to-day, amid the multitude of such heresies, vary one iota from Rome without having some name of terrible sound and length, coupled with an anathema, hurled at his head. It was so with the Reformation. It was so with Wesley. It has been so with almost every Methodist schism; and we are now beginning to realize that the right often lay with those who were driven away, and the blame with the powers that were. Church discipline should not be based upon the idea that men and women are ever to remain babies in intelligence and judgment, but should aim at the development of a self-acting and perfected humanity. This end can never

be reached while our individual beliefs are prescribed for us by others, and when churches descend to the dictation of mere petty details of individual conduct! Good sense, cultivated taste, and the powerful checks of public sentiment, are better safeguards in these matters than prescriptive rules.

2. *Methodism must extend her principles.*

The societies, their members, the places of worship, the preachers, are no longer under the personal control of one man, or "his heirs and assigns for ever," to be held or dismissed at pleasure. Hence

(*a*) The rights of separate congregations must be extended. Those who support a pastor have a right to say whom they will support; and, where they deliberately choose a man, they should have him, if possible, and bear the consequences of their choice.

(*b*) The possibility of a lengthened term of the pastorate should be provided for. Dr. Rigg, in the article before referred to, shows that Mr. Wesley contemplated this. In his "Deed Poll," there stands a provision that the "three years' rule" shall not be binding on Methodist preachers who are also clergymen of the Established Church of England. This has seemed a strange piece of partiality. Dr. Rigg regards it as a piece of far-seeing statesmanship; and he is, doubtless, right. Wesley looked to the consolidation of fixed suns in great centres, with smaller satellites revolving around them, till, as these centres increased in number, the fluctuating itinerancy would gradually settle into a permanent pastorate, and, by this gradual change, avoid the evils of a sudden stoppage of the revolving bodies. The precise plan proposed cannot now be adopted; for the Church of England allowed the golden opportunity to pass forever. Cannot the statesmanship of Methodism rise to an equality with the demands of the time, and form a plan which may secure a lengthened, or, should it be desired in any case, a continued pastorate? Her interests in great centres call for this.

3. *Methodism must heal old sores by appropriate sacrifices.*

The Canadian M. E. Church should be conciliated. It will be better for the future of the whole body, and for the country, that estrangements and antagonisms come to an end. The Methodist Church of Canada, itself, needs

episcopal supervision. To adopt Bishops would not merely be a graceful act to a body whose size and growing educational interests make it desirable to unite with her in forming one great Methodist Church, but would tend to benefit the larger body. Any sacerdotal tendencies of the Episcopate would be checked in the presence of such an anti-sacerdotal theology as has been suggested in this work; and thus the arguments which frustrated the adoption of the "General Superintendency," some years ago, would be obviated.

8.

Relation of Methodism to Protestant unity.

Is a reunion of the churches desirable? Is it desired?

I.

Common work demands a common organization.

Why is any ecclesiastical organization necessary at all? There are those who, in church and state, are practical anarchists. They see no use for government at all. They observe the tendencies of thought during the progress of ages, and find that, from worshipping their rulers, men, at first, come to regard them as divinely commissioned, and, at last, reach the conception of a state of society in which no external authority shall control the liberty of the individual. They observe how governments tend to force upon men the temporary and the conventional, instead of the essential and the eternal. They see how, instead of defending and elevating the masses, governments tend toward oppression. They ask: why, if self-government is the evident end of humanity, should there be any external control whatever? Others, again, who see the need of organizations for carrying on any of life's purposes, think the present appliances of Christianity quite sufficient. They ask: have not denominational distinctions freed the world from great oppressions, elicited truth, developed energy, been a mutual guard over each other, promoted civilization, spread Christianity? Would not unity tend to a corruption now avoided? To both these classes, the answer must be given,—common aims demand common organizations, whether the aims be mechanical, municipal, or ecclesiastical. There is an aim common to all the

denominations. This is constantly forced upon our attention. It is seen in education. Shall every sect support its own schools, or shall all combine to establish a uniform system of instruction? It is seen in humanitarian effort. Shall every sect have its own hospitals, or shall all combine to promote a common and efficient system of beneficence? The feeble and comparatively inefficient character of almost all denominational effort in these matters gives a decided answer to the questions proposed. Now, there are aims common to all the divisions of Christianity. They need to become acquainted with each other. They have a common relation to the civil government. They have a common foe in the vice they aim to exterminate. They have a common humanity to bless. They have a common interest in education and the relief of poverty and helplessness. They have one God whose will is to be made supreme over all. Yet there is no common organization for carrying out these common aims. To go no further than the one first mentioned, let us ask what common means exists by which the various churches may become acquainted with each other's character and views? In the discussion of comprehensive schemes for the conversion of the world, doctrinal views largely mould the decisions arrived at: in what assembly can the zealous "Evangelical" meet on common ground with the equally zealous "Ritualist," and find that, in the man he dreaded, there is a godliness as deep as his own, and, in his opponent's arguments, a cogency he never realized when they came to him at second hand? In the discussion of methods for the promotion of Christian work, the history of denomination effort is of immense advantage: on what platform can the Quaker or the Unitarian stand, as a brother, with Presbyterian or Congregationalist or Methodist, and tell of his methods and his success? Even a frank endeavor, on the part of an "orthodox" clergyman, to do simple justice to the history of Unitarian effort is likely to be regarded as an unparalleled impertinence. Yet the collective wisdom of all is necessary to the proper performance of a work common to all; and narrowness must result from the absence of a common platform on which representatives from all denominations may meet, and, without suspicions of each other's Christianity, may propound their schemes for the benefit of Man.

II.

The tendencies toward union show a sense of its importance.

Running parallel with a growing desire for large nationalities is a similar desire for large churches. The scattered branches of Presbyterianism and Methodism exhibit a tendency to come together. In churches which are not so divided as these have been, there is an evident unwillingness to separate. The Free Church of England and the Reformed Episcopal Church of America, though they have many strong reasons to offer for their existence, do not seem likely soon to be very numerous or powerful. Clergymen who cannot yield their consciences to the keeping of majorities remain in churches with which they are not in perfect sympathy rather than promote division by leaving them; and laymen, even where vital questions are involved, long resist all attempts at the severance of their ecclesiastical connections. Even the "Old Catholics," who have been compelled to protest against the tendencies of the Papacy, tremble on the verge of a Protestantism whose bent is to division, and cling tenaciously to that Apostolical Succession which seems to them the safe-guard of unity. There is, then, evidently a growing and almost universal desire for unity amongst the Christian churches. It is hardly in place, here, to notice another fact which is making itself apparent, both in England and America; yet it should not be entirely ignored that, amongst the Jews, in their views on the Sabbath, in their forms of worship, and in their thoughts on the Messiah, there is at work an influence which is drawing them, in some places, closer to Christianity than they have ever previously been.

III.

The removal of great systems of evil demand this union.

It is always unwise to remove even an evil system, until a better is prepared to succeed it. Such systems still exist: has Protestantism really been prepared to supplant them? Protestantism, as it now exists, contains within itself antagonistic elements of life and death. In its fundamental principle, it has a germ of perpetual growth and endless development: in its application of that principle, it contains the seeds of its own dissolution. It exhibits at once a tendency to promote human progress and elevation,

and to die from a want of cohesion. Its future may be that of an orb which was once believed to have given light to the heavens, but which, by convulsions, became so diminished that its influence, as a whole, was lost, and its history became a matter of antiquarian speculation. Who does not know the perplexity of Romanist or Jew or Pagan when he is required to choose between the contending claims of the Protestant sects? Why have the great Missionary Societies of Protestantism portioned out the mission-fields between them? Is it not a tacit confession that, in the presence of Paganism, only unity must be seen? The desire for non-interference with the missions of the Independents in Madagascar had a deeper foundation than selfishness. But this division of the mission-field is only a temporary postponement of a collision which must come, when civilization amongst the Christianized heathen promotes a wider intercourse between them. Then will come the discovery that what each was taught to regard as Christianity is not all Christianity; and in the questions which the discovery will originate, will there be no danger to religion itself? A better form of Christianity than any now existing is an imperative necessity; and so deeply do men feel this that, under what seems a mere aesthetic reaction towards mediævalism, there grows steadily a professed catholicism, against which the combined efforts of pulpit, bench, and fiction are employed in vain, while the Papacy, in spite of all attacks, lingers in its blighting, withering corruption and tyranny, waiting for the coming of a prophecied better time before the cry of its ruin goes up to Heaven.

IV.

What the continuation of the present system means.

It means rivalry for denominational success in every petty village or country settlement. It means attention divided between work which is really God's and work which arises purely from denominational necessities. It means wasted energies and resources. It means the practical assumption of the infallibility of denominational peculiarities, and the perpetuation of "parish standards" of life, character, and work. It means the intellectual and moral paralysis of the pulpit. It means that grand intellects who would submit, as ministers of Christ, to comparative poverty

and obscurity for the opportunity of doing good to men, must be prevented from following their noblest aspirations, unless they can tie their thoughts to the sentiments of majorities not always superior to themselves, and, parting with their manhood, lisp their "Shibboleth" with the crowd. It is easy to say to men: "If you are not satisfied with the church you are in, go elsewhere." What does this "go elsewhere," said to good men, mean? It means scorn and humiliation, the loss of life's most tender associations, violence to some of its dearest bonds, the blasting of its brightest hopes, the perpetuation of littleness and bigotry, the sacrifice of *men* to "little systems" that "have their day and cease to be"; and all this is for what? For some petty rule which may have served some good prudential end, but which could never be made universal. The man and the Christian, both lay and clerical, are often treated by our denominational system as if made for keeping rules, and not the rules for benefiting men. And what shall be said when one forms the conception of a Christianity higher than any or all of our denominations, and can yield to nothing less than his high ideal? If a layman, he must, like the founder of the Burnett "Prize Essays," go on his lonely way, companionless, and, perhaps, be branded as an infidel; or, like the younger Newman, he may, in his very loneliness, be left to wander, embittered against all claims to supernatural authority, to the verge of Atheism. If he is a clergyman, he may be left, after years of service have unfitted him for any other employment, to beg for a home from door to door of the denominations, only to reject them, or to be rejected by them, one by one, even when they profess to believe that his "gifts, graces and fruits" mark him as one "called of God" to the ministry of His church,—while they who reject him still call themselves that church! O Protestantism! boast not thyself against thy sister, Rome. Thou hast thy martyrs, too: their blood is crying from thy garments against thy cruelty; and God shall avenge them, and that right early!

But what is the tendency of this practical muzzling of the pulpit? If it resulted only in silencing a few audacious men, it might be borne; but do its results reach no farther than this? Like the boomerang, it rebounds on the hand that hurls it. It narrows the range of subjects which the pulpit treats. It consequently limits the religious education of the masses who must ever depend upon the pulpit

for much of their knowledge of divine truth. It makes dull sermons by demanding a constant repetition of thoughts every man knows as well as his minister; or it seeks for novelty in the sensational presentation of the familiar truths, rather than in an extension of the intellectual vision beyond the sacred limits of denominational orthodoxy. It transfers the power of the living voice to the press. It deprives the Lord's Day of one inducement to its holy observance. It stabs the very heart of Christianity.

The accomplishment of a union of Protestantism is one of the grandest problems of the day; and he who can point out the method by which it can be reached is one of the best friends of humanity. Grander than the grandest aims of statesmanship, inasmuch as it overleaps the boundaries of nations or continents, and looks for nothing less than the ultimate unity of the human race under one great confederation, it almost stuns us by its vastness; but, to the ambition that rises equal to its immensity, it affords a sphere for the exercise of the mightiest genius and the most seraphic heart, while it imparts an inspiration, heaven-begotten, that sends the spirit forth, like Uriel,

> "Swift as a shooting star
> "In autumn, 'thwart the night,"

to carry its message of blessing to mankind. Yet the greatness of the project invests it with almost overwhelming difficulties.

V.

The difficulties of the question.

1. The present condition of the popular mind. In Protestantism, no movement can be successful that does not coincide with the will of the masses. Popular opinion must respond favorably to any call for action, or the call will pass unheeded. Now, do the masses possess the knowledge necessary to a proper appreciation of the question at issue? Such writers as the Newmans, Manning, Ewer, Cordner, Draper, and a host of others, have written on the subject embraced in this question: who, in Canada, have read their works? A few persons in scattered localities have, doubtless, read enough to prevent them from shuddering with a holy horror if the opposing arguments are broached in their presence; but what of the masses? Take any ordinary congregation, let us extend our observation

to similar ones in any Province, let us look from city to town, village, country; and how many persons are there who have been made acquainted with the points of discussion between educated Romanists and Protestants, especially with Protestant scientists? Are not our pulpits rather ringing with attacks on science which leave the masses under the impression that Huxley and Tyndall and Draper are fools, not to say villains, in the presence of the eloquent and good men who, though they never knew what science is, from any personal acquaintance with it, think themselves perfectly competent, on the strength of the information gained from a few magazine or newspaper articles, to demolish the whole presumptuous and "atheistic" crowd? Under such circumstances, how can one expect to find an enlightened public? Besides, any attempt to enlighten the public is likely to meet with discouragement where it should rather be welcomed. The very denominationalism beyond which Christians need to be taught to rise whispers its words of warning "prudence"; and longings for a wider intellectual culture amongst the people are met by advice to circulate "religious biography,"—a very good thing it its place, but not the only, or the chief, food needed by the times.

The very "defences" that are written to preserve Christianity often either ignore the fundamental questions or betray Christianity into the hands of its corruptors; rhetoric largely usurps the place of logic; and the craving for preaching that will arouse the religious feelings drives away that which, by cultivating the judgment, would give a better substratum on which the emotions might be made to rest. The public feeling which would welcome any attempt to show the true basis for the reunion of the churches has, the writer fears, yet to be created, so far as Canada is concerned. He will be glad to find himself mistaken.

2. A greater difficulty arises from confusion between dogmas and the truth they are intended to represent. The day is past when popular opinion on the constitution of the Church forbade a dissentient voice; but the ghost of dogma still creates a terror that silences every independent public utterance, forces those whose private intercourse is intimate enough for the first whispers of confidence to speak with bated breath and guarded phrase, probes, with inquisitorial power, the secret questionings of the heart, and drives the defenders of private judgment calmly

piously, sincerely, and almost tearfully, to threaten the ecclesiastical life of him who dares to use that judgment. In the dim moonlight, we see before us the grand proportions of the Church of the Living God; and we long to explore it. But, before its portals stands this ghost of dogma. In sepulchral tones, it cries: "Seek not an entrance here, ye bold adventurers. Be content with Rome, and thither turn your steps!" The sheet must be plucked from this ghost, and its terrors must be dispelled, or the building it guards cannot be visited, its sweet and deep-toned organ cannot awaken the echoes of the night that might resound through arch and aisle; the play of the morning's sun upon its richly-tinted windows cannot be seen, and none can hear the "still small voice" that speaks from God amid its solemn silence.

Let Christianity return to its primitive simplicity, and the world stands ready to embrace it; and on the ground of a common spirit there will rise a Church as grand as ever fired a poet's thought or a Christian's heart.

"Twice in her season of decay
The fallen Church hath felt Elijah's eye
Dart from the wild its piercing ray;
Not keener burns, in the chill morning sky,
The herald star
Whose torch afar
Shadows and boding night-birds fly.

Methinks we need him once again,
That favored seer—but where shall he be found?
By Cherith's side we seek in vain,
In vain on Carmel's green and lonely mound:
Angels no more
From Sinai soar
On his celestial errands bound.

* * * * * *

And since we see, and not afar,
The twilight of the great and dreadful day,
Why linger, till Elijah's car
Stoop from the clouds? Why sleep ye? rise and pray,
Ye heralds seal'd
In camp or field
Your Saviour's banner to display." *

3. What church will be the leader in the movement towards this comprehensive union of the Protestant forces against the tide of sacerdotalism? The foe is upon us in disciplined line, and with crowding hosts. He snuffs the battle from afar, and the voice of his shouting is in our ears. He laughs as he dreams of speedy victory. Where is the

* *Keble*, Christian Year. St. John Baptist's Day.

Rütli on which the cantons of Protestantism may assemble, to repel the haughty enemy, and build up the commonwealth of Christianity? Let Pan-Synods and Pan-Conferences unite the different bodies of Protestantism on merely denominational bases, and they will but feed the fires of a more deadly antagonism. We want a re-united Protestantism on grounds at once Christian and Catholic. What church will show the way? Such a church must not be disintegrating. No body whose genius compels it to seek the destruction of rival forms of benevolent or Christian work can lead the way here. Such a church must react on others by the inspiration of a high example, and not by attempts at humiliating absorption. Such a church must have a historical reputation for spiritual life. No æsthetic taste and no intellectual acumen can wake to enthusiasm the masses whose hearts beat only for a God whose power they can feel, as well as see and admire. This church must be wedded to no particular outward form. It must not insist on fighting modern battles in the armor, and with the weapons, of the times of feudalism. This church must have standards of doctrine such as will admit of enlarged and enlarging views, without doing violence to them, or without suppression of the Truth. It is no easy matter for a church to fly in the face of its historical symbols of doctrine; for not only *noblesse*, but *histoire, oblige*. But it is death to a church when its creed cannot be frankly and honestly accepted in its evident signification.

Again and again, in disguised form, has the opportunity come to different churches for a large statesmanship to grapple with some mighty question, the solution of which would have made any one of these churches the leader of God's returning hosts; but traditional blindness has led to the stoning and slaughter of God's messengers, and the golden occasion has passed away.

4. Goldwin Smith, at the close of an address delivered, some years ago, at a Convocation of the University of Victoria College, remarked that Methodism, having arisen from opposition to no existing form of Christianity, but only from opposition to sin, had the best opportunity for becoming the nucleus of a re-union of the Church of God. The sentiment is worthy of attention from its suggestiveness. It unfolds the primary aim and spirit of the body referred to, and suggests many thoughts on the relation of that informing spirit to its historical development and future prospects. But the sentiment becomes more deserving of

notice from the character and advantages of him who expressed it. His wide culture, his freedom from necessitarianism, his observation of the effects of theological questions and ecclesiastical organizations upon the destiny of the world, and, above all, his practical acquaintance with Methodism in the United States and Canada, qualify him to speak with authority either for or against the church whose ministrations he, for some time, attended.

In the Methodist Church lie the elements necessary to success in the work of leading the way to victory.

Let her but set the example of catholicity, and others will follow. She can do it without any violence to her standards. Let her but assert her first principles. Let her remember the progress in the investigation of fact, in Scripture and out of it, which has been made since Wesley's time, and, in his spirit, frankly accept the situation in which she finds herself, conforming herself to the wants of this present time; and what a vista opens up before her! Let a large statesmanship grapple with the questions that must come up for her discussion, and more than one blessing will attend her. Unions there shall be, of denominations,—tired of separate effort and energies wasted in the maintenance of struggling existence, and finding, perhaps, in conjunction with her, the liberty and life they need,—increasing in scope till, in ever-growing confederations, dropping, at last, all denominational names and conventionalities, Jew and Gentile form one Church of God! Mystery shall be abandoned, and Christian truth simplified, till, in unbiassed loyalty to fact, scientist and theologian seek the common Truth! Popular education, demanded alike by teacher and taught, no longer neglected, dreaded, or shunned, will spread amongst the masses an intelligence that will go far to banish superstition, disease, and vice! Beneficence, the rule of Christian piety, will spread comfort and peace to the utmost bounds of human life! Christ shall reign on the earth, in the prevalent spirit of universal Love!

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Roy, James.
Catholicity and Methodism; or, The relation of John Wesley to modern thought. Montreal, Burland-Desbarats, 1877.
109p. 23cm.

1. Methodism--Addresses, essays, lectures.
I. Title.

A12101

CCSC/mmb